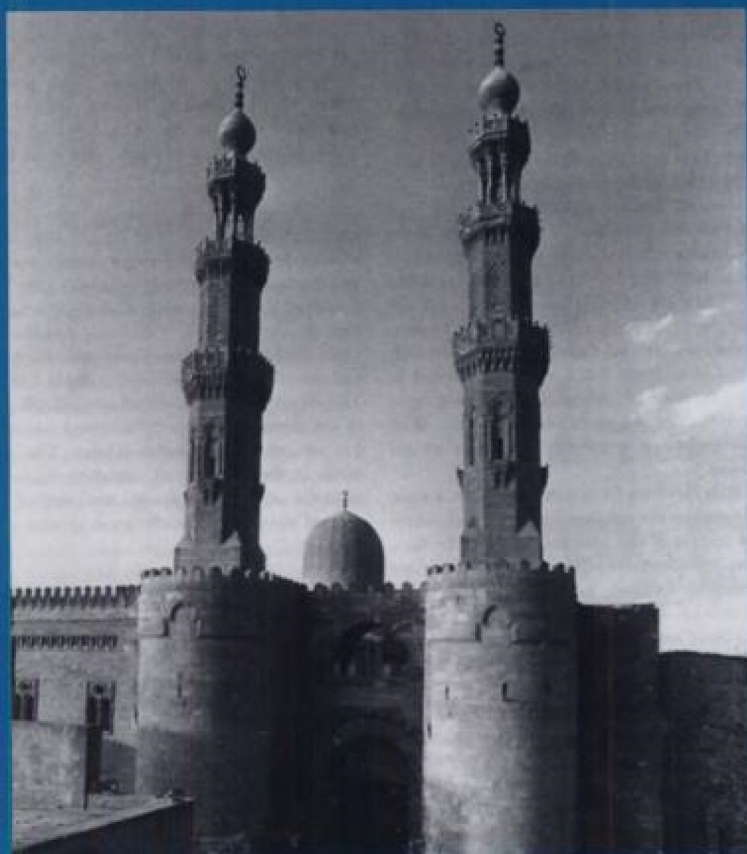


Saladin in Egypt

by
Yaacov Lev



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SALADIN IN EGYPT

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YAACOV LEV



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	<i>Asian and African Studies</i> (Haifa)
Abu Shama (Beirut)	Abu Shama, <i>Al-Rawdatayn fī Akhbar al-Dawlatayn</i> , (Beirut, n. d.), 2 vols
AI	<i>Annales Islamologiques</i>
BEO	<i>Bulletin des Études Orientales</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>Crusaders and Muslims</i>	<i>Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria</i> , (ed) M. Shatzmiller (Leiden, 1993)
E.I.2.	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2nd Edition
<i>Egypt and Syria</i>	<i>Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Ears</i> , (eds) U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet (Leuven, 1995)
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>The Jihad and its Time</i>	<i>The Jihad and its Time</i> , Dedicated to Andrew Stefan Ehrenkreutz, (eds) H. Dajani-Shakeel and R. A. Messier (Ann Arbor, 1991)
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>Maritime Aspects of Migration</i>	<i>Maritime Aspects of Migration</i> , (ed) K. Friedland (Wien, 1989)
<i>Medieval Historical Writings</i>	<i>Medieval Historical Writings in the Christian and Islamic Worlds</i> , (ed) D. O. Morgan (London, 1982)
MM	<i>The Mariner's Mirror</i>
MW	<i>The Muslim World</i>
REI	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i>
SI	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>War and Society</i>	<i>War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th-15th Centuries</i> , (ed) Y. Lev (Leiden, 1997)

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INTRODUCTION

a) *Questions and the Sources*

The main aim of this book is to discuss the waning of the Fatimid state and to examine Saladin's policies in Egypt, which created a new political and social order. At the beginning, it seemed a simple and straightforward matter, the sources abundant and freely available. However, progress was hampered by problems with the source material. It became clear that most of our data on Saladin's administrative, fiscal, military and naval policies in Egypt are derived from a single source: the lost contemporary chronicle by Qadi al-Fadil. Only Saladin's religious policies are well attested to by a variety of the sources due to the rich late medieval biographical literature.¹ Other sources contemporary with Saladin do provide information on his internal policies, but the data are beset by immense contradictions. The difficulties with the sources are not a new problem. A number of scholars have devoted great effort in the attempt to understand and clarify these problems, and my own work relies much on their findings.²

The content of the book is shaped by the need to re-examine the sources and events that led to Saladin's rise to power in Egypt. It must be said that re-examination of the sources is frustrating and occasionally quite futile. Saladin is portrayed in diametrically opposed ways by his admirers and some of his critics, notably Ibn al-Athir. Our ability to penetrate beyond these contradictory accounts is seriously hampered by our limited understanding of the system of political and moral values that guided the men of the twelfth century. Therefore, our ability to discern the hidden motives behind the conflicting presentations of Saladin is restricted. Chapter One reflects and deals with these difficulties.

But the situation is not altogether hopeless. The obvious way out of such difficulties with conflicting and contradictory data is to employ sources which do not belong to the two opposing his-

¹ This aspect has been dealt with in great detail by G. La Viere Leiser, see bibliography.

² See the works of H. A. R. Gibb, P. M. Holt and D. S. Richards listed in the bibliography and quoted in Chapters One and Two.

torical traditions: of Saladin's admirers and his critics. Indeed, on some occasions, such independent fragments do exist and provide an important corrective to sources biased one way or the other to Saladin. Most surprisingly some original documents cited in full in the literary sources remain neglected. A careful reading of them sheds much fresh light on the events under discussion. These types of sources are utilized in Chapter Two. However, it is not only a question of sources but also of perspective. The second chapter is written from the point of view of Fatimid history. The years 1169-1171 constitute a chapter in Fatimid history as much as they offer a history of Saladin's rise to power. When the events of these years are also approached from the point of view of Fatimid realities a clearer picture of Saladin's intentions and policies emerges.

The need to examine and re-examine the sources also looms large when Saladin's internal policies are examined (see Chapter Three). Frequently these policies are presented so as to accord with Saladin's image as a pious and just ruler and devoted warrior of the Holy War. We must always be aware of the fact that Saladin's very real achievements—the victory at Hittin and the conquest of Jerusalem—had already been formed into a myth during his lifetime and this obliterated Saladin's personality and deeds. Only on rare occasions is the non-mythical Saladin discernable.

b) *The Outlines of Political History, 1169-1174*

The aim of this subsection is to provide a short account of the political history of the period 1169-1174 which will serve as an unifying term of reference for the whole book. The main events that took place in those years are referred to constantly in subsequent chapters.

During the 1060's Egypt became a battle ground between Fatimid military leaders, who fought with the help of foreign armies for the post of the vizier. Two regional powers became involved in the internal affairs of Egypt; Nur al-Din of Damascus and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. From 1162, Fatimid politics were overshadowed by Shawar's bid for power. In that year, Shawar, the governor of Upper Egypt, established himself in Cairo and

became the strong man behind the throne. But his triumph was short-lived; he was driven away from the capital by another contender for power, Dirgham. Shawar found refuge in Damascus at the court of Nur al-Din whom he persuaded to give military backing to his attempt to regain power in Egypt. In April 1164, Shawar, supported by Nur al-Din's expeditionary force commanded by Shirkuh, moved to Egypt. Shawar's bid for power was crowned with success: with Shirkuh's help he re-established himself as vizier, however, he had no intention of keeping his promises to Nur al-Din. In order to oust Shirkuh from Egypt, Shawar enlisted the support of Amalric, the King of Jerusalem. Shawar's gamble proved to be correct beyond all expectations: the Franks and Shirkuh clashed indecisively on Egyptian soil and eventually both parties agreed to leave Egypt (October 1164). For a short period of time, Shawar could enjoy the success of his divisive policies.

In 1167, Amalric and Shirkuh at the head of their forces were again in Egypt. This round of fighting was rich in event. On 19 March 1167, the Franks and Shirkuh fought a major but inconclusive battle known as the Battle of Babayn. In its wake, Shirkuh left Saladin to defend Alexandria while he himself overran Upper Egypt. For three months, Saladin was besieged in Alexandria by Shawar and the Franks. The siege brought great misery to the beleaguered town and its inhabitants, but Saladin's firm stand created a military stalemate which convinced the Franks and Shirkuh to agree to the withdrawal from Egypt of both the Crusaders and Nur al-Din's forces (Spring 1167).

By 1168, the weakness of Egypt also attracted the attention of Byzantium. The two Christian powers of the Eastern Mediterranean—Byzantium and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem—negotiated to combine forces in a joint military expedition against Egypt. It was an attractive alliance; Byzantium had an important asset to offer—her naval forces. Nonetheless, Amalric launched his new offensive against Egypt alone. In October 1168, Shawar alone, with no help from Damascus, was confronted by the third Frankish invasion of Egypt. The Crusaders stormed and conquered the town of Bilbays, and moved against the capital which comprised the two cities of Fustat and Cairo. On 12 November, Shawar set Fustat on fire and offered vast sums of money to buy off Amalric. Appeals for help from Shawar, or al-'Adid, the Fatimid Imam himself, reached Damascus. Nur al-Din watched the Frankish

invasion of Egypt with great concern and prepared, on his own initiative, a large force to be dispatched to Egypt. Shirkuh and Saladin found themselves once again campaigning in Egypt. Their very arrival to Egypt caused Amalric to retreat (January 1169).

Following the departure of Amalric, Shawar found himself in a precarious position; he now had to face the victorious Syrian expeditionary force. This proved to be a task beyond his ability. On 18 January, he was killed by Shirkuh's men. The elimination of Shawar paved the way for Shirkuh's appointment as the Fatimid vizier. However, his term of office was a very short one: he died on 23 March 1169. Three days later, Shirkuh was succeeded in the post by his nephew, Saladin. From 26 March, 1169 till 11 September 1171, Saladin served as Fatimid vizier. He used his post to strengthen his position vis-à-vis al-ʿAdid. The most important event in the shift of power from al-ʿAdid to Saladin was the destruction of the corps of black Fatimid infantry, which comprised the backbone of the army and served as the main buttress of the regime (August 1169). Nonetheless, the final overthrow of the Fatimid regime did not follow immediately.

Wars with the Crusaders and the defence of the Egyptian Mediterranean coast absorbed much of Saladin's time and energy. Eventually, the alliance between Byzantium and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem took concrete form and the two powers launched a combined attack on Damietta, which was beaten off by Saladin's forces (25 October-13 December, 1169). In December 1170, Saladin conducted a futile campaign in southern Palestine, but was more successful in Ayla (modern ʿAqaba), conquering a Frankish fort on a tiny off-shore island. In 1170, Saladin's position in Egypt greatly improved following the pacification of Upper Egypt, and his sense of personal security strengthened with the arrival from Damascus of his extended family; father and brothers. During the period that Saladin served as Fatimid vizier, he pursued a policy which aimed at undermining the Ismaʿili character of the Fatimid state. In Muharram and Shaʿban 566/September 1170 and May 1171, three *madrasas*, law colleges for teaching Sunni schools of law, were established in Fustat and Cairo, and a Sunni *cadi* was nominated in the capital. At the beginning of Muharram 567/September 1171, the name of al-ʿAdid was omitted from the Friday sermons delivered at the congregational mosques in the capital. The omission of the name of the Fatimid

ruler heralded a shift in political allegiance in favor of the Abbasids and the official return of Egypt to the Sunni fold. On 10 Muharram/11 September, al-ʿAdid died and with him was extinguished the Fatimid state.

Until the death of Nur al-Din in May 1174, Saladin's relations with his formal overlord were strained. In October 1171, a coordinated attack planned by Nur al-Din and Saladin on the Frankish forts of Karak and Shawbak came to naught due to Saladin's failure to meet Nur al-Din. A year later, Saladin's independent foray against these strongholds failed to restore trust to the relations between the two leaders. But difficulties in the relations between Saladin and Nur al-Din did not prevent Saladin from ruling Egypt as he saw fit. His position in Egypt was firmly secured. A plot discovered in 1174 was of minor significance, posing no real threat to his rule. From Egypt, Saladin conducted an expansionistic policy in three directions: Nubia, the Mediterranean coast of North Africa and Yemen. Egypt itself was successfully defended against another Christian Mediterranean power—the Normans of Sicily. Their attack on Alexandria was repelled after much fighting (August 1174).

CHAPTER ONE

THE SOURCES

1. *Setting the Stage: The Twelfth Century*

a. *Cultural and Religious Trends*

I. The abundance of sources for Saladin's rise to power in Egypt should not mislead us as to our ability to fathom the deeper motives and aspirations of the main players on the political scene. We must be always aware that most of our information is derived from the writings of a small and well-defined group of Saladin's associates and admirers notably Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani and Ibn Shaddad. On the other hand stands Ibn al-Athir, who is mostly hostile to Saladin. To make things worse, only part of the original writings of Saladin's admirers has reached us directly. Therefore, we are dependent on later historians, who were familiar with those works and incorporated them in their own writings. Furthermore, Saladin's historian-admirers wrote their works after the death of Saladin. Their outlook must have been influenced by Saladin's later achievements; the victory at Hittin and the conquest of Jerusalem. In retrospect, they tended to idealize the personality of the man who became a hero of the Holy War. The events of Saladin's early life were remodelled and censored to fit in with his later fame.

In order to evaluate the writings of Saladin's historian-admirers and Ibn al-Athir as sources for the history of Saladin it is necessary to try to capture the mood of the time. Saladin's historians were a product of their age and their attitudes and perceptions were shaped by the political and cultural values of the twelfth century. Equally important are their personal biographies. Not only writing on Saladin, 'Imad al-Din and Qadi al-Fadil also wrote about themselves. To a lesser degree this is true in respect of other historians of Saladin, too. Although Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad entered into Saladin's service at different times and circumstances they all became members of his inner circle. They have much in common in their educational and cultural backgrounds as well as in their professional careers. With the exception of Qadi al-Fadil, their world was shaped by the new institu-

tions of learning that spread throughout the Middle East from the second half of the eleventh century. The cultural and religious life of the period was marked by traditionalism combined with mysticism, and focused on three institutions: *madrasa*, *khanqa* and *dar al-hadith*. In the *madrasa*, Sunni law and other auxiliary subjects were taught. *Dar al-Hadith* was an institution of a more narrow scope devoted to the study of the Prophetic traditions. The *khanqa* served the mystics (*sufis*) as a focal point of their social and religious life. The social life of the period was permeated to great extent by the zealous adherence of people, (*ta'assub*), to legal schools which were associated with theological schools of thought.¹

The culture of Arabic-speaking lands of the twelfth-century Middle East was much influenced by developments in Iran. The Seljuks, who reached Baghdad in 1055, were instrumental in spreading religious trends and forms of social organization that had evolved in the Iranian world. Parallel with the movement to the west of the Seljuks, men of religion ('*ulama*'), jurists (*fuqaha*') and Sufis emigrated from Iran. They transplanted and disseminated Iranian Muslim culture to the Arabic-speaking Middle East and Egypt. The proliferation of *madrasas* in the Middle East is usually associated with the name of the Seljukid vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, the founder of the Nizamiyya *madrasa* at Baghdad, in 1063. However, as the works of C. E. Bosworth and Richard W. Bulliet have shown, *madrasas* were common in Nishapur and in other smaller towns of Khurasan before the second half of the eleventh century. Also the fusion of law (*fiqh*), theology (*kalam*) and moderate forms of Sufism took place in Khurasan of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In Nishapur two important developments took place; the adaption of Sufism by the Shafi'i jurists and the rise of the

¹ For the traditionalist trend, see G. Makdisi, "The Sunni Revival", in *Islamic Civilization, 950-1150*, (ed) D. S. Richards (Oxford, 1973), reprinted in his *History and Politics in Eleventh Century Baghdad*, (London, 1990). For the spread of Sufism, see G. Makdisi, "The Hanbali School and Sufism", *Humaniora Islamica*, 2(1974), 61-72. For Sufi institutions such as *khanqa*, *zawiya* and *ribat* see, D. Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable and His World*, (Leiden, 1994), 139-40. For the social significance of the adherence to legal schools, see R. W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, (Cambridge Mass., 1972), 28-39; I. M. Lapidus, "Muslim Cities and Islamic Societies" in *Middle Eastern Cities*, (ed) I. M. Lapidus (Berkeley, 1969), 50, 53-4; W. Madelung, "The Spread of Maturidism and the Turks", reprinted in his, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, (London, 1985), 135. I owe the last reference to the kindness of D. Talmon-Heller of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

khanqa as a typical Sufi institution.² The personal contribution of Nizam al-Mulk, himself of Iranian origin, must not be underestimated. He created a network of law colleges and *khanqas* which covered the most important cities of Iran and Iraq. As an institution of learning the Nizamiyya was different in its educational character and the way it was administrated from other institutions of learning in eleventh century Baghdad. As for the motives of Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier, in the words of George Makdisi, "sought to control the 'ulama' in order to control the masses".³

In the earlier periods, scholars and men of religion were to great extent economically independent and pursued a variety of different occupations. The process of learning itself was not rigidly structured and did not center on a specific educational institution. Most of the teaching took place at the mosque which was a multi-purpose institution for worship, learning and socializing. In the longer run, the spread of the law colleges in the Middle East (in the second half of the eleventh century and throughout the twelfth century) was instrumental for the institutionalization and professionalization of scholarship in medieval Islam.⁴ At the law colleges, the students

² For cultural and educational developments, see C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994-1040*, 2nd. ed. (Beirut, 1973), 173, 174-5; Bulliet, *The Patricians*, 39, n. 19, 249-55, and *Islam. The View from the Edge*, (N. Y., 1994), ch. 9; Madelung, 141; M. Malamud, "Sufi Organization and Structures of Authority in Medieval Nishapur", *IJMES*, 26(1994), 427-9, 435, 436.

³ G. Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh Century Baghdad", *BSOAS*, XXIV(1961), 55, reprinted in his *Religion, Law and Learning in Classical Islam*, (London, 1991). In political terms, Bulliet sees the *madrasa* as one of the tools in the hands of the regime to control the patriciate. See, *The Patricians*, 73. The essence of the *madrasa* is much debated among the scholars. For a recent critical review of the prevailing views, see M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*, (Cambridge, 1994), ch. 2. For his discussion of the political utility of the *madrasa*, see 51-3, esp., 52.

⁴ For scholars in the first centuries of Islam, see H. J. Cohen, "The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionalists in the Classical Period of Islam", *JESHO*, 13(1970), 16-88, esp., 25, 39. For later periods, see J. E. Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the 'Ulama' in Medieval Damascus", *SI*, (1980), 105-34, esp., 114; Bulliet, *Islam*, 149. For the spread of *madrasas*, see D. Sourdel, "Réflexions sur la diffusion de la madrasa en Orient du XI^e au XIII^e siècle", *REI*, XLIV(1976), 165-84. On the base of evidence drawn from Nishapur, Bulliet states that: "It was teaching rather than learning that was the object of systematization" and "The central concern of the system was certification of teachers". See, *The Patricians*, 49, 50. To what extent these conclusions apply to the Arabic-speaking lands of the Middle East in the eleventh-twelfth centuries is, at this stage of the research, unclear.

were financially supported during the period of their learning by incomes derived from pious endowments set up for the benefit of these institutions. Needless to say that the teaching staff of the college was paid too. Under the Seljuks the involvement of the government in the religious life, in the form of political backing of legal and theological schools of thought, was greatly intensified. The Turks adhered fanatically to the Hanafi legal system and objected to Ash'ari theology. In the lands under their rule in Iran and the Middle East these religious preferences were translated into more or less systematic state policies.⁵

When approaching the religious and cultural life of the twelfth century it would be misleading to focus only on the high culture of the jurists and law colleges or the learned Sufis in the *khanqas*. The Islam of the masses, urban and certainly rural, was differently oriented; more toward spiritualism and less concerned with texts. In popular Islam holy men were more central than learned men of religion. But the religion of the educated elite and that of the masses were not worlds entirely apart. Adherence to legal schools was important and central in the lives and outlook of the historians of the period as much as it was in the lives of their less renowned contemporaries.⁶ Within Sunni Islam, a wide common ground can be discerned between high and popular forms of religion, and many religious practices were typical of both the Islam of the educated elite and of that of the people. Cross influences are discerned also between Shi'ite and Sunni Islam. The celebrations of *mawlid al-nabi*, Muhammad's Nativity, exemplify this trend. This festival was a Fatimid innovation and its beginnings go back to the first decades of the twelfth century. From Egypt it spread beyond Fatimid domains and was adopted by staunch Sunni rulers among them Nur al-Din.⁷ In very much the same way the nights of mid-Sha'ban were widely celebrated in the Sunni world as well

⁵ Seljukid policies were not without precedent. For instance, the Shafi'i legal school enjoyed the support of the Ghaznavid rulers, see C. L. Klausner, *The Seljuk Vezirate*, (Cambridge Mass., 1973), 63-4. For other examples, see, Madelung, 126-7, 129, 130-3, 146-7.

⁶ Madelung, 132, n.59, 140.

⁷ For the Fatimid origin of *mawlid al-nabi*, see R. Shinar, "Traditional and Reformist Mawlid Celebrations in the Maghrib", in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, (ed) M. Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), 73; Y. Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, (Leiden, 1991), 146. For its adaptation by Nur al-Din, see N. J. G. Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival*, (Leiden, 1993), 31-4.

as in Fatimid Egypt. In Baghdad in the third decade of the ninth century these celebrations were opposed by the Hanbalis who considered them to be an unlawful innovation. But in the twelfth century, a Hanbali rural community in Syria adopted these rites without reservation. The visitation of the graves of holy men and women was another religious practice common to urban and rural societies which crossed the boundaries of Shi'ite and Sunni Islam.⁸

II. Historians of Saladin were rather typical members of the Muslim civilian elite of the twelfth century, an elite which was composed of two distinct but partly overlapping groups: administrators and men of religion. Both 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad had been educated at law colleges and, like many of their colleagues, sought careers in the service of rulers and in state administration.⁹ 'Imad al-Din, a jurist by education, an administrator by profession and a man of high culture, was exposed in the formative period of his life to Sufism and he had apparently some latent Sufi leanings. He chose as his burial place a Sufi cemetery.¹⁰ The convergence of attitudes between rulers and men of religion is a familiar phenomenon in Islam of the high middle ages. The portrait of Saladin given by contemporary historians was much influenced by this trend. The biographical note on Nur al-Din (ruled 1146-1174) given by Ibn 'Asakir (1105-1176) in his biographical dictionary of people connected with Damascus—*Ta'rikh Dimashq*—epito-

⁸ For Sunni and Shi'ite traditions concerning Sha'ban, see M. Kister, "Sha'ban is My Month", in *Studia Oientalia Memoriae D. H. Baneth Dedicata*, (Jerusalem, 1979), 15-37. For the celebrations of Sha'ban, see S. Sabari, *Mouvements populaires à Baghdad à l'époque abbasside IXè-XIè siècles*, (Paris, 1981), 106; D. Talmon-Heller, "The Shaykh and the Community. Popular Hanbalite Islam in 12th-13th Century Jabal Nablus and Jabal Qaysun", *SI*, (1995), 116; Lev, *State*, 144-5. For fusion, on the one hand, and antagonism, on the other hand, between "low" and "high" forms of Sufism in the late middle ages, see T. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, (Cambridge, 1994), 211-5.

⁹ For the connections between education at the *madrasas* and administrative careers, see Klausner, 62-3, 64-5, 66, who brings the examples of 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Hubayra. For men of religion and administrators, see R. S. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, (Albany, 1977), 377-80.

¹⁰ Al-Mundhiri, *Al-Takmila li-Wafayat al-Naqala*, (ed) B. A. Marouf (Najaf, 1968), II, 288. Separate Sufi cemeteries existed in twelfth-century Damascus and in late medieval Cairo. See, Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, (ed) Muhibb al-Din 'Umar ibn Ghrama al-'Amrawi (Beirut, 1995), XV, 11; L. Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: the Khanqah*, (Berlin, 1988), 22.

mizes the prevailing political ideologies and the measure of co-operation between the civilian elite and rulers in the twelfth century. As Ibn 'Asakir himself states, his aim was to enumerate Nur al-Din's virtues (*manaqib*). But his note is more than just a dull list of virtues. Ibn 'Asakir provides a comprehensive account of Nur al-Din's military exploits and religious and social policies. Nonetheless, his account is a mixture of both virtues and policies and is dominated by the tendency to personify Nur al-Din's policies. Nur al-Din is described as a person with an aptitude for learning and religious learning in particular. He scrupulously followed religious observances such as prayers, alms-giving (*sadaqa*), and fasting, and was modest and restrained in his personal manners. He followed the example of the forefathers (*salaf*) and of men of religion and piety.¹¹

Ibn 'Asakir's account begins with a brief history of the Zengid family mentioning Nur al-Din's grandfather, Ak Sungur, and Nur al-Din's father, 'Imad al-Din, and his exploits against the Christians—the Crusaders and the Byzantines.¹² The essential part of the text begins with the establishment of Nur al-Din's rule in Aleppo. At this point, Nur al-Din's credentials as a warrior of the Holy War are presented, and his struggle against the Shi'ites in Aleppo is described. Ibn 'Asakir states that under Nur al-Din's rule Sunni Islam prevailed in Aleppo. In this context, Ibn 'Asakir mentions the establishment of law colleges by Nur al-Din and the setting up of pious endowments for their support.¹³

In discussing Nur al-Din's seizure of Damascus, Ibn 'Asakir emphasizes that the town was peacefully surrendered to him by the population due to the high prices of foodstuffs and their fear of the Crusaders (literally infidels). This theme is elaborated elsewhere in Ibn 'Asakir's text, which emphasizes that Nur al-Din's wars did not result in the killing of Muslims and the cities that

¹¹ The text of Ibn 'Asakir's biography of Nur al-Din has been edited and translated into French by N. Elisséeff, see his "Un document contemporain de Nur al-Din, sa notice biographique par Ibn 'Asakir", *BEO*, XXV(1972), 125-40, esp., 139. I am grateful to Y. Frenkel of Haifa University who drew my attention to this article. A photocopy edition of the whole manuscript of Ibn 'Asakir's *Ta'rikh Dimashq* has been published in the Arab world (n. p., n. d.) in 19 volumes. Nur al-Din biography is included in volume sixteen.

¹² My references are to both the published text and the manuscript, see Ibn 'Asakir, (ed) Elisséeff, 136, para. 1-3; MS, XVI, 293, ll, 4-12, 15-7.

¹³ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para., 1-4; MS, XVI, 293, ll, 18-30.

Nur al-Din conquered submitted themselves to his rule.¹⁴ These remarks reflect the fact that internal wars between various Muslim potentates were the norm in the twelfth century and Nur al-Din in creating his state fought as much against fellow Muslims as against the Christians.

Nur al-Din's policies and deeds in Damascus are described in great detail. The walls of the town were improved and law colleges were set up. Nur al-Din brought economic prosperity to the town and illegal taxes were abolished. The taxation of wine was stopped and its consumption prohibited. Justice was administered by the judicial system and Nur al-Din established the Palace of Justice (*dar al-'adl*) personally presiding over the hearings. Men of religion were well treated and honored.¹⁵ Ibn 'Asakir specifies Nur al-Din's acts of generosity toward the weak elements in the society. He lavished alms on the orphans and poor and established pious endowments for the treatment of the sick, insane and blind. Also those who taught orphans the Koran and writing were paid by pious endowments.¹⁶ These deeds of Nur al-Din are part of what might in modern parlance be described as his social policy. However, Ibn 'Asakir uses the word *sadaqa*, alms-giving/charity, for both Nur al-Din's social policy and his personal religiosity. The lack of a distinction between public and personal aspects in the lives and activities of rulers is clearly and nicely illustrated here. This blurring of boundaries is behind the juxtaposition of Nur al-Din's virtues and policies in Ibn 'Asakir's account.

The same lack of distinction is revealed when Ibn 'Asakir mentions various building projects of Nur al-Din such as *ribats* (a multi-role institution; fortified outpost, inn for travellers or place for the Sufis and poor), *khanqas*, hospitals, bridges and *khans* (caravanserais). These policies, says Ibn 'Asakir, were implemented throughout Nur al-Din's territories.¹⁷ This account lumps together

¹⁴ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para., 5; 140, para., 3; MS, XVI, 293, l, 32; 296, ll, 6-7.

¹⁵ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para., 5, 7; 138, para., 1; MS, XVI, 293, l, 33; 294, ll, 3-4, 10-2.

¹⁶ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 138, para., 1-2; MS, XVI, 294, ll, 13, 21-2.

¹⁷ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 138, para., 1-2; MS, XVI, 294, ll, 21-3. For the spread of *ribats* from Khurasan to Baghdad and the association of *ribats* with Sufism, see J. Chabbi, "La fonction du ribat à Bagdad du Vè siècle au début du VIIè siècle", *REL*, XLII(1972), 101-21. According to Louis Pouzet, within the context of the Sufi world of thirteenth-century Damascus, *ribat* was an institution more asso-

two quite different categories of building; those which served commercial purposes and facilitated travel and trade (caravansaries and bridges), and buildings which had religious and social functions. In the same vein justice is equated with economic prosperity. The theme of justice appears several times in Ibn 'Asakir's text which asserts that in the lands conquered by Nur al-Din justice was administrated and illegal taxation and fiscal oppression were stopped. Nur al-Din listened to the complaints against his governors and ordered them to correct their ways. Ibn 'Asakir ascribes to Nur al-Din an aura of holiness by saying that Nur al-Din's *baraka* saved people from hardship and brought prosperity to his subjects.¹⁸

In various places throughout the whole text Nur al-Din is depicted as a warrior of the Holy War. His personal military prowess—his firmness in battles, archery and leadership—is praised. He led his men in attacks (*karra*) and covered them in retreat (*farra*). And his victories, achieved together with his brother, against the Crusaders, Byzantines and Armenians are specified. Ibn 'Asakir stresses the way Nur al-Din treated the families of those who died in the Holy War; they were given financial support and their sons appointed to the post of governor.¹⁹ Another essential feature of Ibn 'Asakir's appreciation of Nur al-Din's rule is the extensive description of his policies toward the Holy Cities of Arabia. Nur al-Din is portrayed as adopting comprehensive long-term policies to improve the situation of the Holy Cities and this at a considerable cost to himself. According to Ibn 'Asakir, Nur al-Din showed respect to the emir of Medina and sent his troops to protect the town. He also improved the walls of the town and provided Medina with food. The emir of Mecca was granted fiefs (*iqta's*) and the taxes collected from pilgrims were abolished. The Bedouin were

ciated with women. See, his *Damas au VII^e/XIII^e siècle. Vie et structures religieuses dans une métropole islamique*, (Beirut, 1991), 211. I owe the last reference to the kindness of Anne-Marie Eddé. For *ribats* designated for women in pre-Fatimid and Fatimid Egypt, see ch. 3.

¹⁸ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para., 7, 140, para., 2, 6. Ibn 'Asakir's reference to Nur al-Din's buildings does not cover the full extent of his building activities. For that, see N. Elisséeff, "Les monuments de Nur al-Din", *BEO*, XIII (1949-1951), 5-50.

¹⁹ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para., 6, 138, para., 3-4, 140, para., 5; MS, XVI, 294, l, 7, 296, ll, 8-9.

also given *iqta's* in exchange for ceasing their depredations against the pilgrims.²⁰

Ibn 'Asakir, a scion of a leading family of learned men in Damascus, lived and wrote his huge biographical dictionary of people connected with the history of Damascus under the rule of Nur al-Din (who expressed interest in his work and encouraged him to finish it). Ibn 'Asakir, on his part, lent support to Nur al-Din's religious policies.²¹ Thus Ibn 'Asakir's appraisal of Nur al-Din's rule, although not an official biography, is the product of a sympathizer. Ibn 'Asakir's text bears witness to the fact that the call for a Holy War turned into a powerful political and religious force in Syria of the second half of the twelfth century. Nur al-Din adopted the ideology of the Holy War and manipulated it for political ends. He assumed the title *mujahid*, warrior of the Holy War, early in his rule (1149). By comparison, Nur al-Din's father did not use this title, even not after the conquest of Edessa in 1144. In Nur al-Din's protocol the title *al-'adil*—the just (meaning the just ruler)—preceded even the title *mujahid*. Ibn 'Asakir's text reflects this presumption by stressing Nur al-Din's concern with the proper administration of justice by the *cadi* and the establishment of the Palace of Justice. In the Palace of Justice the hearing of grievances (*nazir fi 'l-mazalim*) took place. Basically, this was justice dispensed by the ruler himself: it had a long history in pre-Islamic Middle East and medieval Islam before Nur al-Din and was also perceived as a symbol of sovereignty and power. Nur al-Din's innovation was essentially instrumental: he set up the Palace of Justice to manifest his interest in the hearing of grievances and to emphasize his authority as a sovereign.²²

Ibn 'Asakir's text must have been known to 'Imad al-Din who, about two decades later, also wrote an appraisal of Nur al-Din's

²⁰ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 138, para., 1-2; MS, XVI, 294, ll, 15-6, 19.

²¹ For the cooperation between Nur al-Din and Ibn 'Asakir, see Elisséeff, "Une document", 126; Morray, 144-5; Jean-Michel Mouton, *Damas et sa Principauté sous les Saljoukides et les Bourides 468-549/1076-1154*, (Cairo, 1994), 4, 5, 6-7.

²² For Nur al-Din's titles, see Y. Tabbaa, "Monuments with Message: Propagation of Jihad under Nur al-Din (1146-1174)", in *The Meeting of Two Worlds*, (ed) V. P. Goss (Michigan, 1986), 224, 226; N. Elisséeff, "La titulature de Nur al-Din d'après ses inscriptions", *BEO*, XIV(1952-1954), 171-3, 181-2. For *dar al-'adl*, see J. S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in the Islamic State*, (Istanbul, 1985), 13; N. O. Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of Dar al-'Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient", *IJMES*, 27(1995), 20-1.

reign. The similarities between the two texts are many and fundamental. 'Imad al-Din says that Nur al-Din was the one who restored the glory of Islam in Syria. His achievements were multitudinous; he defeated the Crusaders and repossessed lands that they had conquered from the Muslims. And he was responsible for the revival of religious science and the teaching of law. 'Imad al-Din praises Nur al-Din for the various building projects that were carried out during his rule. These included the construction of congregational mosques, law colleges and *khanqas*, all provided with generous pious endowments. 'Imad al-Din mentions also the building of fortifications, *khans* and *ribats*. Elsewhere in his writings, 'Imad al-Din discerns yet another positive aspect of Nur al-Din's rule: the abolition of taxes and custom duties unauthorized by the law. For instance, 'Imad al-Din says that in 569/1173-1174, the only taxes that were levied in Nur al-Din's territories were those prescribed by the law such as the land tax (*kharaj*) and poll-tax (*jizya*) imposed on non-Muslims.²³ The question of taxation posed a problem in relations between jurists and men of religion and rulers. The extent of taxation permitted by the law was very narrow and could not satisfy the needs of the state. Nur al-Din used to explain that the levying of taxes unauthorized by the law is necessary to cover the expenses of the Holy War.²⁴ These two texts give us a clear picture of what leading personalities of the civilian elite of the twelfth century sought and appreciated in their rulers: commitment to Holy War and Sunni orthodoxy, and what services they were ready to render them—to justify the wars that their patrons waged against fellow-Muslims.

b. *Political Life*

While Ibn 'Asakir's text is important for understanding the ideological dimension of relations between rulers and civilians, 'Umara's description of Fatimid politics reveals the real context in which these relations took place. 'Umara was a poet of Yemeni origin,

²³ Al-Bundari, *Sana al-Barq al-Shami*, (ed) R. Sesen (Beirut, 1971), 55-6, 143-4, 145. For 'Imad al-Din's admiration of Nur al-Din, see D. S. Richards, "Imad al-Din al-Isfahani. Administrator, Litterateur and Historian", in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, (ed) M. Shatzmiller (Leiden, 1993), 146.

²⁴ E. Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade*, (Paris, 1968), 73.

who lived in Egypt during the closing years of the Fatimid period and the first years of Saladin's rule. 'Umara is a well-known personality. Hartwig Derenbourg has studied his life and edited his poetry and more recently Pieter Smoor discussed many of its aspects. Therefore I shall only discuss a few points directly pertinent to the purpose of the present work. Maqrizi (1364-1442) provides a concise but vivid account of 'Umara's early life and his career at the Najahid court in Zabid. 'Umara arrived in Zabid in 531/1136-1137 at the age of sixteen in search of further education. For about seven years he studied Shafi'i law in Zabid. From 538/1143-1144 'Umara was in the service of Hurra, the Queen mother, attaining a high position at her court and moving freely among the members of the ruling establishment. His social advancement went hand in hand with a great improvement in his economic position. He became a very wealthy merchant with commercial interests in Aden. His legal career also flourished; he taught law and issued legal opinions (*fatwas*), and his literary skills earned him recognition among members of the ruling circles. For ten years 'Umara thrived in Zabid. In 548/1153-1154 he became entangled in the complex politics of the region and, as a result, his position in Zabid was seriously undermined. A year later 'Umara found himself a fugitive in Mecca, but his reputation was great enough to secure for him a diplomatic mission to Cairo on behalf of the local ruler. 'Umara arrived in Egypt in 550/1155-1156 and was well received by the Fatimid ruling family and the vizier. He returned to Mecca and in 551/1156-1157, was again dispatched on a mission to Cairo choosing this time to settle in Egypt.

'Umara's book, entitled *Contemporary Observations on the History of the Egyptians Viziers*, is of an autobiographical character.²⁵ In it he recounts the circumstances in which he composed various poems. These background stories are intertwined with remarks and observations about the viziers and other people of the ruling circles whom 'Umara knew. It is true that 'Umara, in contrast to Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad, was not an administrator, but his dealings with the ruling circles in the Holy Cities

²⁵ For 'Umara's biography by Maqrizi, see his *Kitab al-Muqaffa al-Kabir*, (ed) M. Yalaoui (Beirut, 1991), VIII, 742. 'Umara's autobiography is entitled as *Al-Nukat al-'Asriyya fi Akhbar al-Wuzara' al-Misriyya*, (ed) H. Derenbourg (Paris, 1897). See, 93, where 'Umara explains the aim and the method which guided him in writing the book.

of Arabia, Yemen and Egypt were extensive. According to his own testimony, 'Umara served as an emissary, trader on behalf of rulers, keeper of deposits and above all as panegyrist.²⁶ He describes his relations with members of the ruling circles as based on payment in exchange of service (*khudma*) and panegyric (*madh*).²⁷ But some of his relations were based on friendship (*unsa*), too. For example, such were 'Umara's relations with the vizier Shawar.²⁸

'Umara arrived in Egypt during the early years of the vizierate of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, called al-Malik al-Salih who, according to late medieval historians, was a Shi'ite of the Imami branch. Recently Seta B. Dadoyan has suggested that the family of Banu Ruzzik were Nusayris. 'Umara describes him as a fanatic, but he became a member of his circle. Out of what must have been many meetings with Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, 'Umara chose to tell how in a session (*majlis*) that took place in the house of the vizier he protested against defamation of two of the Rightly Guided Caliphs of early Islam, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, whom the Shi'ites abhorred. Such sessions were both a pastime and a typical form in which cultural and religious life was conducted.²⁹ But 'Umara's choice to recount this event is not incidental; his aim is to portray himself as a person possessing values and integrity.

For seven years (1154-1161) Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik served as the vizier. He was assassinated by soldiers at the instigation of the aunt of the child-Imam, al-'Adid (19 Ramadan 556/10 September 1161).

²⁶ 'Umara, 41, 42, 142.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 94. References to financial rewards and gifts that 'Umara received from people of the ruling class are frequently mentioned throughout 'Umara's book. For instance, from Shawar's brother 'Umara received a fief (*iqta'*) and he was on his payroll for three years receiving each month fifteen *dinars*. See, 135, and 43, 62-3, 88.

²⁸ 'Umara, 69, 94, 135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 44-5. Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik associated himself with Shi'ites. For example, a member of his circle was the emir al-Zafari, who had served as the governor of Alexandria and Damietta. But, he became a Sufi and an expert on Shiism whom Ibn Ruzzik much respected. See Safadi, *Kitab al-Wafi bi-l-Wafayat*, (ed) S. Dederling (Beirut, 1982), XIV, 8. In 1159, Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik established a large pious endowment for the benefit of *ashraf* (i.e. the descendants of Hasan and Husayn, the two sons of 'Ali and Fatima) in Fustat, Cairo and Medina and its environs. For this *waqf*, see Cl. Cahen, Y. Ragib and M. A. Taher, "L'achat et le Waqf d'un grand domaine Égyptien par le vizir Fatimide Tala'i' b. Ruzzik", *AI*, XIV(1978), 113, II, 22-3, 27, 114, II, 29-30, 35, 115, II, 43-4. For 'Umara's testimony about the Nusayri affiliation of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, see S. B. Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians. Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East*, (Leiden, 1977), 158, n. 22.

The reason behind the plot was the marriage between Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's daughter and the Fatimid Imam. It was a forced marriage by which the vizier attempted to gain supreme power and legitimacy in the Fatimid state. 'Umara, a Fatimid sympathizer, says nothing about the background and the circumstances of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's death. But he provides a summary of his rule. Basically he describes him as a civilized ruler. Undoubtedly what appealed most to 'Umara was Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's love of literature and literati and the fact that the vizier himself was a poet. 'Umara is even more enthusiastic about the short rule of Ruzzik ibn Tala'i', the vizier's son, who was entitled as al-Malik al-Nasir al-'Adil. He occupied the post of the vizier between 1161-1162. The new vizier abolished unlawful taxation, ceased financial extortions and was very generous toward the Holy Cities of Arabia. Ruzzik ibn Tala'i' was killed by Shawar, or his son Tayy, following a successful rebellion. 'Umara describes in vivid terms how in the vizierial palace he was shown by the conspirators the head of the slain vizier. 'Umara was shocked and says that it was a revolting killing. Although he condemns it, he is very positive in his appreciation of Shawar's first period as the vizier.³⁰

'Umara tries to strike an objective tone when writing about Shawar whose friendship and financial support he fully acknowledges. During his second vizierate Shawar shed much blood and 'Umara holds him responsible for the invasion of Egypt by the Crusaders and Nur al-Din. 'Umara sums up his evaluation of the Fatimid viziers by saying that there was no one like Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik who advanced members of the ruling establishment while the vizier Dirgham excelled in killing them and the Shawar family impoverished them by financial extortions. The killings perpetrated by Dirgham were a result of factional power struggles within the army. 'Umara's remarks reveal the fear and the powerlessness of the civilians in the face of the unleashed violence.³¹ Administrators and men of religion were politically and economically dependent on

³⁰ 'Umara, 66-7, 69. In many ways 'Umara's poetry is highly idiosyncratic verging on the blasphemous. The same is true with his exaggerated praises of the vizier Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik. See, P. Smoor, "The Master of the Century': Fatimid Poets in Cairo", in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, (eds), U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet (Leuven, 1995), 148-52. For 'Umara's assessment of both the vizier Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik and his son, Ruzzik, see Dadoyan, 164-5, 168, 171-2.

³¹ 'Umara, 74, 77, 87, 88.

rulers. The rulers held a monopoly on administrative posts and they created vast and lucrative pious endowments through which religious and educational institutions were maintained. In this violent political environment the civilian elite had to struggle for survival and influence while trying to maintain at least a semblance of self-respect and integrity.³²

2. *Saladin's Historians*

a. *Qadi al-Fadil*

I. The personal biographies of Saladin's historians are as important as the cultural and religious milieu of the twelfth century. All of the three historian-admirers of Saladin entered into his service in the prime of their lives bringing with them experience and established sets of values. In many ways the most important personality among this group was 'Abd al-Rahim ibn 'Ali al-Baysani known as Qadi al-Fadil who was born on 15 Jumada II 529/1 April 1135, in Ascalon. The sources at our disposal differ regarding the family origin. One version says that the family origin had been from Baysan, a small and humble town in Palestine, and al-Fadil's father, who died in 544/1149-1150, at the age of 43, served as the *cadi* and Comptroller (*nazir*) of Ascalon. Following the fall of the town to the Crusaders (1153) the family moved to Egypt.³³ Another version says that the family had its origins in Ascalon, but al-Fadil's father was appointed as the *cadi* of Baysan and the fam-

³² A different approach is adopted by D. E. P. Jackson, who sees the Muslim society of the twelfth century as vertically structured and cut across by professional and administrative classes which "tended to be relatively unaffected by the higher political turmoil of a given age". See, his "Some Preliminary Reflections on the Chancery Correspondence of the Qadi al-Fadil", in *Egypt and Syria*, 208.

³³ Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbar Misr*, (ed) A. F. Sayyid (Cairo, 1981), 144; Ibn al-'Adim, *Bughyat al-Talab fi Ta'rikh Halab*, (ed) S. Zakkar (Damascus, 1988), II, 981; Abu Shama, *Kitab al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*, (eds) M. H. M. Ahmad and M. M. Ziyada (Cairo, 1962), I, pt,2, 403. The fact that Qadi al-Fadil's father served as a *cadi* in Ascalon is well attested to. Abu Shama quotes a document issued in 1147 by al-Hafiz to Qadi al-Fadil's father, who is described as responsible for jurisdiction (*quda'* and *hukm*) in Ascalon. This document deals with the question who are authorized to give attestation (*tazkiya*) at the court, i.e. to serve as witnesses. See, Abu Shama, (ed) M. H. M. Ahmad (Cairo, 1956), I, pt,1, 128-9.

ily epithet reflects this appointment rather than the family's place of origin.³⁴ It is rather strange that such basic facts regarding an eminent person like Qadi al-Fadil are controversial. The reasons for this difference of opinion and its possible significance, if any, are unclear. Notwithstanding this difficulty it is possible to reconstruct Qadi al-Fadil's early career and how he entered into the service of Shirkuh and Saladin from the sources.

According to most of Qadi al-Fadil's biographers, he received his basic education in Ascalon. This included the memorization of Koran and some poetry. The next stage brought the young Qadi al-Fadil to Cairo where he went in search for a patron and further education. According to Qadi al-Fadil's own memoirs, the patron he found was head of the Fatimid Chancery, Ibn Khallal. There is nothing implausible in this version. It was a tradition that people employed in the administration brought their sons to the Chancery and other administrative offices to be introduced to the art of an epistolary and secretarial writing (*rasa'il*), which was highly cultivated in the Fatimid state.³⁵ It was an informal, but possibly formalised, system of cooperation among the administrators to help the careers of their sons and to improve the chances that they could bequeath their posts to their sons. Thus the training of Qadi al-Fadil for a career in the administration fell within a familiar pattern. The same picture emerges from the available data concerning the education of another Fatimid administrator and a renowned master of the epistolary art, Ibn al-Sayrafi (1071-1147). In his youth, Ibn al-Sayrafi was instructed in the art of writing *rasa'il* by the head of the Office of the Army. Later he was assigned to serve in the Chancery becoming, in due time, the head of the office.³⁶ As in any other pre-modern traditional society, the tendency to inherit posts and occupations was powerful and common and the civilian elite was not exceptional in this.³⁷ For its part,

³⁴ Al-Mundhiri, II, 210-1; Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*, (ed) I. 'Abbas (Beirut, 1993), IV, 1562-3; Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan*, (ed) I. 'Abbas (Beirut, 1968-71), III, 158, 161.

³⁵ The source for this information is Diya al-Din ibn al-Athir, the brother of Ibn al-Athir, the historian. Diya al-Din tells about a conversation he had with Qadi al-Fadil in Damascus in 1192. See, Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 487-8; cf. G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West*, (Edinburgh, 1990), 65-6.

³⁶ Ibn Muyassar, 138.

³⁷ Diya al-Din ibn al-Athir, on the authority of Qadi al-Fadil, quoted by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 488.

the Fatimid regime was not hostile to these practices.³⁸ The beneficent attitude of the regime was in line with the conservatism and quest for social stability typical of the societies of that age. It was also a calculated policy instrumental in fostering the loyalty and the dependence of the civilian elite on the state.

Although Qadi al-Fadil found a patron in Cairo, the next stages of his education are a mystery, and the title of *cadi* (*qadi*) does not necessarily imply that he received a systematic legal education. It was a honorific for high-ranking persons common in the Fatimid administration.³⁹ In fact, in early twelfth-century Fatimid Cairo, there were very few opportunities to acquire a solid education in one of the Sunni legal systems. The first colleges for teaching Sunni law in Egypt were established in Alexandria not in the capital. In its religious and cultural life Alexandria was very different from the capital. The impact of Ismailism on Alexandria was weak. The town was connected by sea-routes to Muslim North Africa and Spain and open to influences emanating from these staunch Sunni regions. Many scholars and jurists who belonged to the Maliki legal school came to Alexandria and settled there. The first institution for teaching Maliki law was set up in the town toward the end of the eleventh century, and other were established during the first half of the twelfth century. The beginnings of Qadi al-Fadil's career are connected with Alexandria; for some time he was employed in the local administration as a scribe. But it is unreasonable to assume that he attended any law college in Alexandria. Al-Mundhiri (1185-1258), in his obituary note for Qadi al-Fadil, says only that he studied under the two most celebrated jurists of

³⁸ See the somewhat vague and distorted report of Ibn Abi Tayy as quoted by Maqrizi in his *Kitab al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar bi Dhikr al-Khitat wa-l-Athar*, (Bulaq, 1324), II, 309-310. Ibn Abi Tayy credits al-Mu'izz, the first Fatimid ruler in Egypt, with the initiative to train talented youth for governmental service. Provincial governors were ordered to send promising youths from the *awlad al-nas* to Cairo for training. In Maqrizi's time the term *awlad al-nas* meant the sons of the Mamluks, however, his use of it for the Fatimid period is anachronistic.

³⁹ For instance, Qadi al-Fadil's secretary (*katib*), who served him in the Fatimid period, was also entitled as a *cadi*. In 400/1009-1010, the title *cadi* was bestowed on a Christian administrator. But this case can be dismissed as one of al-Hakim's idiosyncrasies. See Ibn al-'Adim, IV, 2302; Maqrizi, *Itti'az al-Hanafa' bi Akhbar al-A'imma al-Fatimiyyin al-Khulafa'*, (ed) M. H. M. Ahmad (Cairo, 1971-1973), II, 81; III, 254; cf. I. M. Lapidus, "Ayyubid Religious Policy and the Development of Schools of Law in Cairo", in *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire*, 1969, (Leipzig, 1974), 282.

Alexandria of that time: al-Silafi and Ibn 'Awf.⁴⁰ In 556/1161, Qadi al-Fadil was called back to Cairo to serve in the Office of the Army. This was an initiative of Ruzzik ibn Tala'i' taken immediately after he assumed power following the assassination of his father.⁴¹ Qadi al-Fadil was an eyewitness to the disintegration of the Fatimid state. He was in a good position to gain insight into the events; he mingled with the key players on the political scene. During the twilight of the Fatimid rule the paths of Qadi al-Fadil and 'Umara met on several occasions.⁴² They moved within the same circles, but their ways separated with the arrival of the Ayyubids to Egypt.

II. How exactly Qadi al-Fadil gained the trust of Shirkuh and later of Saladin is difficult to ascertain. Certainly, the circumstances were propitious for shifting his alliance toward the leaders of Nur al-Din's army in Egypt. Qadi al-Fadil himself, like the vast majority of the civilian elite in the service of the Fatimids, was a Sunni Muslim. He could have little religious sympathy for the Fatimid regime. Furthermore, Qadi al-Fadil lived in a period which saw a steady decline in the position of Ismailism as the state religion of Fatimid Egypt. This process was most advanced in Alexandria but was felt in the capital as well. During the twelfth century, some of the viziers who actually ruled the Fatimid state adopted policies which eroded the privileged position that Ismailism had enjoyed in the tenth-eleventh centuries. This trend also continued during the vizierate of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, who did not hesitate to humiliate the Fatimid regime on public occasions by displaying the black colors of the Abbasids instead of the Fatimid white.⁴³ An insight into Qadi al-Fadil's inner world is offered by Smoor's analysis of his poetry from the closing days of the Fatimid dynasty. Smoor observes that it is evident that Qadi al-Fadil "showed no particular knowledge of or interest in, Fatimid teachings". One of Qadi

⁴⁰ The technical term used by al-Mundhiri is a general one *sami'a min*. See, II, 210; Ibn Furat, *Ta'rikh ibn al-Furat*, (ed) M. al-Shama (Basra, 1969), IV, pt.2, 185. For Alexandria and its *madrasas*, see G. Leiser, "The Madrasa and the Islamization of the Middle East. The Case of Egypt", *JARCE*, XXII(1985), 37-40; Lev, *State*, 139-40.

⁴¹ 'Umara, 53-4; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 254.

⁴² 'Umara, 79-80.

⁴³ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 217, 222; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Raf al-'Isr 'an Qudat Misr*, (ed) H. A. Magid (Cairo, 1961), II, 303-4.

al-Fadil's poems studied by Smoor "seems to be a kind of farewell to the whole Fatimid dynasty which would soon make way for the rabid orthodoxy of the Ayyubids".⁴⁴ Whatever were Qadi al-Fadil's personal religious beliefs, as a person trained in the Chancery, he was well versed in the intricacies of Isma'li doctrine and phraseology, as is exemplified by the letters of appointment which he wrote for Shirkuh and Saladin as Fatimid viziers. But a familiarity with a doctrine does not reflect convictions. There can be little doubt that Qadi al-Fadil already adhered to Sunni Islam when he was serving the Fatimids.⁴⁵

How the ties between Qadi al-Fadil and Shirkuh were established remains elusive. The most common version as quoted by the historian Abu Shama (1203-1268) inspires little confidence. This account says that Shirkuh, following his appointment as the vizier, asked for a scribe to run his Chancery. Qadi al-Fadil's superiors in the Fatimid Chancery sent him to Shirkuh with the hope that he would share the fate of his predecessor, who had been killed by Shirkuh. The reason for their dislike of Qadi al-Fadil was his lofty position under Shawar's son, al-Kamil.⁴⁶ It is difficult to ascertain whether Abu Shama gives this information on the authority of 'Imad al-Din, or whether it is his own independent statement. In any case this is an untenable version. It is hardly conceivable that Shirkuh would have agreed to employ a complete stranger in such a vital task.⁴⁷ On the other hand, this account testifies that Qadi al-Fadil was at that time employed in the Chancery. According to Qalqashandi (1335-1418), who is well informed

⁴⁴ See, his "Fatimid Poets and the 'Takhallas' that Bridges the Nights of the Time to the Imam of Time", *Der Islam*, 68(1991), 259-60. A more cautious view is expressed by S. M. Ayyad who says that the extant poetry of Qadi al-Fadil is too meager to allow us to form a view of his attitude toward Ismailism. Ayyad writes: "... much of what remains of his (i.e. Qadi al-Fadil's) encomiastic poetry is devoted to the members of the Fatimid house and high-ranking officers of the Fatimid state. But the texts have been corrupted in some places and purged in others, making it impossible to draw any conclusion as to how far or how consistently he upheld the Isma'ili ideology". See his, "Regional Literature: Egypt", in *The Cambridge History of the Arabic Literature. The Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, (Cambridge, 1990), 438.

⁴⁵ For Qadi al-Fadil's shift of loyalties, see A. S. Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, (Albany, 1972), 58; M. C. Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson, *Saladin. The Politics of the Holy War*, (Cambridge, 1982), 25-6.

⁴⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 403, 420.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, 88.

about the history of the Fatimid administration, the head of the Chancery in that period was Qadi al-Muwaffaq ibn Khallāl. He served in this post from the reign of al-Hafiz (1130-1149) until his death on 23 Jumada II 566/2 March 1171.⁴⁸ It means that during Shirkuh's campaigns in Egypt, Qadi al-Fadil was serving in the Chancery under the same man, who had supervised his training as an apprentice in his early boyhood. No less authority than 'Imad al-Din asserts that Ibn Khallāl was a powerful official who "wrote as he wished".⁴⁹ This is not an unrealistic description. Undoubtedly, during the political disintegration of the Fatimids state, especially in the 1160's, Fatimid administrators took into their hands, and usurped for themselves political powers at the expense of the Fatimid rulers. Apparently during Qadi al-Fadil's service in the Chancery his relations with Shirkuh were established, and his nomination by Shirkuh was an outcome of those relations. Following Shirkuh's death, Qadi al-Fadil entered smoothly into the service of Saladin.⁵⁰ The fifteenth-century Mamluk historian, Maqrizi, says that the two acted in unison and brings as an example of their cooperation the nomination of Sadr al-Din ibn Dirbas as the chief *cadi*.⁵¹

III. Another version of Qadi al-Fadil's early career is provided by Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179-1229), who says that Qadi al-Fadil's father served as a *cadi* of Baysan and later was appointed as a *cadi* of Ascalon. He was also entrusted with responsibility for the secret service (*khavar*) in Ascalon, or in plain words it was his duty to spy on other officials in the town. Eventually, this assignment brought his downfall. Qadi al-Fadil's father failed to inform the authorities in Cairo about the release of a valuable hostage by the

⁴⁸ Qalqashandi, *Subh al-A'sha*, (Cairo, 1913-1919), I, 96-7. Ibn Khallāl lived his last days in retirement in his house which, in 'Imad al-Din's words, became his grave. See, Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 487.

⁴⁹ 'Imad al-Din, *Kharidat al-Qasr fi Jaridat Ahl al-'Asr*, (Egyptian Poets), (eds) A. Amin, Sh. Dayf and I. 'Abbas, (n. p., n.d.), I, 235. This statement of 'Imad al-Din is much quoted by other authors. See, Ibn Khallikan, VII, 219; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 487.

⁵⁰ Maqrizi and Safadi say that the first person who was employed in Saladin's Chancery was Fakhr al-Dawla al-Aswani of the Zubayr family who supported Saladin in Alexandria. See, Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 269; Safadi, (ed) S. Dederling (Beirut, 1972), VI, 118-9.

⁵¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 378-9; cf. H. Dajani-Shakeel, "Displacement of the Palestinians During the Crusades", *MW*, LXVIII(1978), 175.

governor of Ascalon. He was recalled to Cairo and punished for this neglect of duties by confiscation of his property. He died grief-stricken and penniless. His death had a direct influence on the young Qadi al-Fadil, who could not continue his training in the administration. Yaqut's anonymous source says that Qadi al-Fadil went on foot to Alexandria to seek a fresh start in the service of the cadi Ibn Hadid, who employed him as a scribe for a salary of three *dinars* per month.⁵² One could live on such a salary, but Qadi al-Fadil could barely support his siblings, a brother and a sister, who lived in great difficulties in Ascalon. Only following the fall of the town to the Crusaders was the family reunited. During the time of Qadi al-Fadil's employment in the service of Ibn Hadid his great talent in the epistolary art was manifested. So much so that the other scribes in Ibn Hadid's service became envious and anxious for their positions. They smeared Qadi al-Fadil at the court in Cairo and the Fatimid Imam al-Zafir (1149-1154) ordered his governor in Alexandria to punish Qadi al-Fadil by cutting off his hand. But he was dissuaded from sending his orders by Ibn al-Anbari, a scribe in the Chancery. Eventually, through the efforts of Ibn al-Anbari, Qadi al-Fadil was examined by al-Zafir and offered a position in Cairo. But he could not enjoy security for a long time. He, like others, was engulfed by the political upheavals of the late Fatimid period.

Following the ascendancy of Dirgham to vizierate and the escape of Shawar to Damascus, Qadi al-Fadil found himself in an uneasy position. Dirgham was greatly annoyed by Qadi al-Fadil's association with al-Kamil, Shawar's son, who remained in Cairo. Qadi al-Fadil, like 'Umara, was afraid of Dirgham's wrath and sought the intervention of Mulhim, Dirgham's brother, on his behalf. But this prudent move by Qadi al-Fadil was not enough to forestall

⁵² Yaqut, *Udaba'*, IV, 1563. The combination of the posts of cadi and official responsible for the secret police had precedents in the Fatimid state. For the activity of secret police, see Y. Lev, "The Suppression of Crime, the Supervision of Markets, and Urban Society in the Egyptian Capital during the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 3(1988), 77-9. Diverse information about the secret police is to be found in the documents of the Cairo Geniza. See, S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), II, 371, 379. The Banu Hadid were a Maliki family from Toledo which had settled in Alexandria in 1086-1087, and rose to power in the second decade of the twelfth century. See, Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 505, 506-7. For the family, see 'Abd al-'Aziz Salem, "D'Alehandria à Almeria", *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 46(1987), 64-70, esp., 65-6.

his imprisonment together with al-Kamil. Both were released only after the defeat and death of Dirgham. Qadi al-Fadil was rewarded for his loyalty to al-Kamil; he enjoyed a high position in Shawar's circle and the title al-Fadil was conferred upon him.⁵³ The fact that Qadi al-Fadil was Shawar's propagandist is well established. He publicly supported, through his poetry, Shawar's decision to ask the help of the Crusaders against Shirkuh.⁵⁴

But the changing political circumstances had once again an adverse effect on Qadi al-Fadil's life and position. Following the killing of Shawar, Qadi al-Fadil found himself without a patron. According to Yaqut's version, al-'Adid interceded with Shirkuh for Qadi al-Fadil's safety, and he invited him to join his service. But Qadi al-Fadil refused to give his assent to the vilification of Shawar's name. Nonetheless, Qadi al-Fadil established friendly relations with Shirkuh and after his death he was instrumental in convincing al-'Adid to nominate Saladin as vizier.⁵⁵ These two items of information provided by Yaqut are simply untenable. Yaqut's source is at pains to portray Qadi al-Fadil in a positive light as a man of principle who did not distance himself from his benefactors—the Shawar family. At the same time, Qadi al-Fadil is given credit for the promotion of Saladin. This version of Qadi al-Fadil's early life tries to explain the problematic shift of Qadi al-Fadil's loyalties from the Fatimids to the Ayyubids by stressing Qadi al-Fadil's relations with al-'Adid, which are unattested by other source.

Leaving aside the tendentious information of Yaqut's version, his biography of Qadi al-Fadil portrays a man whose life, like that of 'Imad al-Din, was determined by forces which were beyond his control. As 'Umara's autobiography vividly shows, the rapidly changing political scene of the twelfth century forced members of the civilian elite to search for patrons. What they had to offer was their skills and loyalty. However, in order to survive in the face of changing political circumstances, they had to display flexibility and be able to change loyalties and patrons. Yaqut's source tries to convey the impression that when Qadi al-Fadil was faced with such a dilemma, he acted in a dignified way.

⁵³ Yaqut, *Udaba'*, IV, 1563-4.

⁵⁴ H. Dajani-Shakeel, "Egypt and the Egyptians: A focal Point in the Policies and Literature of al-Qadi al-Fadil", *JNES*, 36(1977), 26.

⁵⁵ Yaqut, *Udaba'*, IV, 1565-6.

IV. Qadi al-Fadil flourished in the service of Saladin. His career was tied to Egypt. Although he visited other towns and regions of the Middle East, Qadi al-Fadil was an Egyptian in the full sense of the word. In contrast to 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad whose education and careers brought them to live in many parts of the Middle East, Qadi al-Fadil left Egypt only on trips in the service of Saladin and for the pilgrimage to the Holy Cities of Arabia. Qadi al-Fadil's exact administrative duties in Egypt are not entirely clear. For example, 'Imad al-Din, in his obituary note on Qadi al-Fadil, says in appreciative but vague language that Qadi al-Fadil was the principal driving force behind the affairs of Saladin's regime (*dawla*).⁵⁶ Beside this remark very little concrete information is available. Yaqut says that Qadi al-Fadil was above such things as concerning himself with the title of vizier. He performed the work of the vizier behind the scenes (literally in secret, *sirran*).⁵⁷ This piece of information tallies with the overall aim of the source used by Yaqut, but adds little to our understanding of the issue. It should be kept in mind that Qadi al-Fadil's skills, which earned him the admiration of his contemporaries, were clerical and not administrative. Therefore he was not a natural candidate for the post of vizier. About Qadi al-Fadil's actual administrative assignments we know very little. For example, it is said that in 584/1188-1189, Saladin renewed Qadi al-Fadil's appointment as the official responsible for the affairs of Egypt.⁵⁸ In 586/1190-1191, he was involved in equipping and dispatching ships to Acre to help Saladin's military effort in the war for the town.⁵⁹

During the absence of Saladin from Egypt, the country was ruled by other members of his family; al-'Adil, Saladin's brother, and Taqi al-Din, his nephew. Qadi al-Fadil's position when al-'Adil ruled Egypt was somehow ambiguous. He obeyed al-'Adil's orders, but did not hesitate to blame him for harmful policies which brought the finances of Egypt into disarray. However, he brought his criticism of al-'Adil to Saladin's attention only after the departure of al-'Adil from Egypt.⁶⁰ Qadi al-Fadil's involvement in the internal

⁵⁶ Abu Shama, *Al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*, (Beirut, n. d.), II, 241.

⁵⁷ Yaqut, *Udaba'*, IV, 1562.

⁵⁸ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 137.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 165; Abu Shama, *'Uyun al-Rawdatayn/min Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*, (ed) A. al-Baysumi (Damascus, 1992), II, 220.

⁶⁰ Lyons and Jackson, 211-2.

politics of Saladin's family was considerable. Following Saladin's seizure of Aleppo (June 1183), al-ʿAdil asked to be allowed to relinquish Egypt in favor of the newly annexed territory. Qadi al-Fadil was instrumental in the appointment of Taqi al-Din, with whom he was on friendly terms, to Egypt and the transfer of al-ʿAdil to Aleppo.⁶¹ It seems that Qadi al-Fadil was caught in a web of conflicting loyalties to Saladin, his sons and other members of the family.⁶² Due to unspecified reasons—sickness or perhaps estrangement from Saladin—Qadi al-Fadil remained in Damascus and did not accompany Saladin on the campaign which ended in the victory at the Horns of Hittin. Neither was Qadi al-Fadil present at the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin. Nonetheless, ʿImad al-Din claims that after Hittin Saladin sought Qadi al-Fadil's advice on military matters.⁶³

Following the death of Saladin in Damascus, Qadi al-Fadil returned to Egypt where he was received with great honors by al-Malik al-ʿAziz ʿUthman, Saladin's son who ruled the country. But the last years of Qadi al-Fadil's life in Egypt were not particularly quiet or happy. He was affected by problems in the family life of his brother, ʿAbd 'l-Karim, who lived in Alexandria, and he became involved in the quarrels between Saladin's heirs and their emirs.⁶⁴ Qadi al-Fadil died on 7 Rabiʿ II 596/25 January 1200, and was buried at the Little Cemetery on the foot of the Muqattam Hill. Ibn Khallikan testifies that he visited Qadi al-Fadil's mausoleum (*turba*) several times and gives the date of his death as inscribed on it.⁶⁵ In his lifetime Qadi al-Fadil reaped the material

⁶¹ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 51-2 (quoting ʿImad al-Din).

⁶² Lyons and Jackson, 223; Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 70 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil's letter to Taqi al-Din). For Qadi al-Fadil's strained relations, if not open animosity, with al-ʿAdil, see Ibn Taghribirdi, *Al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wa-l-Qahira*, (Cairo, 1932-1950), VI, 157. ʿImad al-Din characterizes Taqi al-Din, in contrast to al-ʿAdil, as endowed with *hidda*, vigor but also a potential for violence. Thus, he needed the management of Qadi al-Fadil to rectify the consequences of his action. See, *Al-Barq al-Shami*, (ed) R. Sesen (Istanbul, 1979), V, 154.

⁶³ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 82, 99; *Uyun*, II, 144, 158, 186. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1257) says that Qadi al-Fadil was absent from the battle for the conquest of Jerusalem due to a sickness which kept him in Damascus. See, *Miraʾt al-Zaman*, (Hyderabad, 1951), VIII, pt.1, 398.

⁶⁴ Maqrizi, *Kitab al-Suluk*, (ed) M. M. Ziada (n. p., n. d), I, pt.1, 143, 156-7, 177, 198.

⁶⁵ Ibn Khallikan, III, 162.

benefits of his high position and fame. He was a rich man who used his wealth to sustain his interest in learning and for philanthropic purposes. According to the late Safadi (d. 1363), Qadi al-Fadil's annual remuneration was as high as 50,000 *dinars*. In addition, as a private person, he was engaged in trade with India and North Africa. Qadi al-Fadil set up many pious endowments for the support of students of law and the education of orphans. He established a large highly profitable commercial building he had owned (*rab*⁶⁶, *khan*) as a pious endowment for the ransoming of prisoners-of-war.⁶⁶ Of Qadi al-Fadil's own family, wives and children, little is known. He had several sons and the most famous among them was al-Qadi al-Ashraf Ahmad Abu 'l-'Abbas who died in 643/1245-1246. He served the Ayyubid rulers of Egypt with many ups and downs. Ahmad had a vast library but it became dispersed following confiscation by the Sultan al-Kamil. A passion for books ran in Qadi al-Fadil's family. Abu 'l-Qasim, another brother of Qadi al-Fadil, was also an avid book collector.⁶⁷

V. Qadi al-Fadil's unusual skill in the epistolary art won him the admiration of his contemporaries and later generations.⁶⁸ Nevertheless a few scattered remarks shed a somewhat different light on the literary activities of Qadi al-Fadil. For instance, some of the books to which Qadi al-Fadil claimed authorship were in fact written by others. And Qadi al-Fadil's epistolary letters were drawn from the *rasa'il* of a former Fatimid scribe who died in 432/1040-1041 while imprisoned at the royal jail in Cairo.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Safadi quotes Qadi al-Fadil's contemporary, Jamal al-Din ibn Shiyash, who says that Qadi al-Fadil told him about the dedication of the *khan* as a *waqf* in a conversation they had before Qadi al-Fadil set on a pilgrimage to Mecca. See, Safadi, (ed) A. F. Sayyid, (Beirut, 1988), XVIII, 345, 379-80. For other pious endowments set up for ransoming prisoners in twelfth-century Syria, see Mouton, 87-8.

⁶⁷ For Qadi al-Fadil's son Ahmad, see Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 227, 271, 295; Safadi, (ed) I. 'Abbas, (Beirut, 1969), VII, 57. The name of the tutor of Qadi al-Fadil's sons is recorded by Safadi. See, (ed) S. Dederling (Beirut, 1972), VI, 152-3. For Abu 'l-Qasim see, Safadi (ed) R. al-Sayyid (Beirut, 1993), XIX, 82.

⁶⁸ Both Ibn Khallikan (III, 158-9) and Ibn Furat (IV, pt.2, 185) quote 'Imad al-Din's *Kharidat al-Qasr* in which Qadi al-Fadil is described as: "the master of the pen, style and language". For criticism of Qadi al-Fadil's style by al-Wahrani (d. 1178), see Ayyad, 423.

⁶⁹ These remarks are not included in Yaqut's biography of Qadi al-Fadil. The relevant information is scattered throughout the whole of Yaqut's huge biographical dictionary. See, *Udaba'*, II, 639, III, 1000. Safadi follows Yaqut by saying that

Only part of Qadi al-Fadil's huge correspondence (*rasa'il*) has survived either in a manuscript form or through quotation by later historians. The scope of this correspondence is very diversified. Qadi al-Fadil wrote on behalf of Saladin and his brother, al-ʿAdil, to the Caliph in Baghdad, his vizier as well as to many other Muslim rulers of the time. This correspondence includes reports on current events containing references even to minor incidents. The main purpose of these letters was not merely to inform the reader about Saladin's deeds, but to present the deeds and the intentions of Saladin in a favorable light. More than anything else, Qadi al-Fadil was Saladin's propagandist. Nonetheless, he was also a historian. Qadi al-Fadil wrote a detailed chronicle in which he recorded events on a daily basis. This work, known under many titles (the most common being *Mutajaddidat*), has not survived and is available only through citations by later authorities.⁷⁰ The loss of the *Mutajaddidat* is irreplaceable especially as a source for the history of Egypt and, to some extent, for the history of Saladin himself, although for the history of Saladin we have a greater variety of sources. In using the information cited from *Mutajaddidat*, it should be remembered that there is no strict dividing line between Qadi al-Fadil the propagandist of Saladin and Qadi al-Fadil the historian of Saladin.

Asad ibn Mammati composed books in the name of Qadi al-Fadil. See, (ed) J. van Ess (Beirut, 1974), IX, 23. Due to the importance of the letters written by the Fatimid Chancery, grammarians were employed in it as editors. See, Ibn al-Qifti, *Anbah al-Ruwat 'ala Anbah al-Nuhat*, (ed) M. Abu 'l-Fadl Ibrahim (Cairo, 1952), II, 95, 96; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, II, 318. Evidently, Qadi al-Fadil needed no editor. The jail (*khizanat al-bunud*), was located within the complex of the Fatimid royal palaces. It was set up by al-Zahir (1021-1036) as a royal workshop. For its subsequent history, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 278-9, and as jail, 280.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the character of the *Mutajaddidat*, see H. Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt A. H. 564-741/A. D. 1169-1341*, (London, 1972), 13-4; H. Möhring, *Saladin und der Dritte Kreuzzug*, (Wiesbaden, 1980), 220-1. The question of the different titles of this work has been examined by M. H. M. Ahmad. See, his "Some Notes on Arabic Historiography During the Zengid and Ayyubid Periods (521/1127-648/1250)", in *Historians of the Middle East*, (eds) B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London, 1962), 85-6. A long quotation from the *Mutajaddidat* concerning the history of Yemen is found in Ibn al-ʿAdim's *Bughyat*, VI, 2843-5.

b. 'Imad al-Din

I. 'Imad al-Din was born in Isfahan on 2 Jumada II 519/6 July 1125. In contrast with Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din acquired a solid education in jurisprudence. He belonged to the Shafi'i school of law and studied at the Nizamiyya in Baghdad where he distinguished himself in comparative law (*khilaf*) and belle-lettres (*funun al-adab*). Al-Mundhiri says that 'Imad al-Din taught (*haddatha*) the Prophetic traditions in Baghdad, Damascus and Fustat. Like many other graduates of law colleges, 'Imad al-Din sought employment in the administration. He was accepted into the service of the Abbasid vizier Yahya ibn Hubayra (1105-1165), who appointed him to administrative posts in the towns of Wasit and Basra in Iraq.⁷¹ 'Imad al-Din's patron was a towering figure in the political and cultural life of his age. In his activities he strived to strengthen the political autonomy of the Abbasid Caliphate, to combat Shi'ism and to promote the advance of the traditional movement. In 1165, after the death of Ibn Hubayra, his former employees, including 'Imad al-Din, found themselves in prison. But for 'Imad al-Din it was a short imprisonment. In Sha'ban 562/May-June 1167, he was already in Damascus searching for a new patron and employment.⁷² In many respects the religious and cultural life of Damascus was not much different from that of Baghdad. Ibn Hubayra's policies were emulated by Nur al-Din, and traditionalism characterized the cultural life of Nur al-Din's Syria too.⁷³ This cultural unity of Islamic Middle East facilitated the movement around the region of people of the civilian elite searching for career opportunities.

'Imad al-Din made a spectacular career in Damascus. The man

⁷¹ Ibn Khallikan, V, 147-8. Al-Mundhiri (II, 288) says that he received from 'Imad al-Din an *ijaza* (authorization to teach/transmit a certain text) issued in 595/1198-1199 in Damascus. Al-Mundhiri was fourteen years old when he attended 'Imad al-Din's classes. For the Isfahan background of 'Imad al-Din's family, his studies, expertise in jurisprudence and his search for employment, see L. Richter-Bernburg, "Funken aus dem kalten Flint: 'Imad al-Din al-Katib al-Isfahani", *Die Welt des Orients*, XX/XXI (1989/90), 121-55.

⁷² Al-Bundari, 52, 55-7. For the period of 'Imad al-Din's employment in the service of Ibn Hubayra, see Richter-Bernburg, "Funken", XX/XXI (1989/90), 155-62; N. Rabbat, "My Life with Salah al-Din: The Memoirs of 'Imad al-Din al-Katib al-Isfahani", *Edebiyat*, 7(1997), 273-4.

⁷³ For Ibn Hubayra, see H. Mason, *Two Statesmen of Medieval Islam*, (The Hague, 1972). For his influence on Nur al-Din, see N. Elisséeff, *Nur al-Din, un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des Croisades*, (Damascus, 1967), III, 750-70; see also Sourdél, 171, 173, 182.

who opened the way for him in Damascus was Nur al-Din's chief administrator, the *cadi* al-Shahrazuri, whom 'Imad al-Din befriended and whose companion he became. He was appointed by al-Shahrazuri to the Chancery where 'Imad al-Din's command of Persian proved valuable. 'Imad al-Din left a vivid account of his misgivings about the kind of work awaiting him in the Chancery.⁷⁴ His previous appointments were of an administrative nature while the work in the Chancery was essentially clerical. However, he became fascinated by the flow of information that reached the Chancery in the form of letters from different regions, and by the need to keep contact with rulers in Persia, Syria and Egypt.⁷⁵ He clearly found his assignment absorbing and he successfully adopted himself to the new working environment. 'Imad al-Din also managed to establish friendly relations with other administrators in Nur al-Din's service. Notable among them was al-Qaysarani, who later served as Nur al-Din's envoy to Saladin in Egypt.⁷⁶

'Imad al-Din's service in the Chancery became the key to enter into Nur al-Din's inner circle and to gain his confidence. By 568/1172-1173, 'Imad al-Din was in charge of two administrative offices (*diwans*): the Chancery and the Office of the Finance (*istifa*), which was responsible for state's incomes and expenses. In addition he served as a *musharif* of Nur al-Din's *diwan* (i.e. a financial supervisor of the office which was responsible for the management of Nur al-Din's personal estates and properties). Occasionally, 'Imad al-Din went on diplomatic missions on behalf of Nur al-Din.⁷⁷ Another feature of 'Imad al-Din's career in Damascus was his involvement as a teacher and administrator in the world of learning. In Rajab 567/February-March 1172, 'Imad al-Din was nominated as a professor of law (*mudarris*) at a law college established

⁷⁴ Al-Bundari, 68-9; Ibn Khallikan, V, 148; cf. D. S. Richards, "A Consideration of Two Sources for the Life of Saladin", *JSS*, 25(1980), 47-8, and "Imad al-Din", 135-6. For the beginning of 'Imad al-Din's career in Damascus, see Richter-Bernburg, "Funken", *Die Welt des Orients*, XXII(1991), 105-10.

⁷⁵ Al-Bundari, 67-8.

⁷⁶ Ibn al-'Adim, VII, 3100 (quoting 'Imad al-Din's *Kharidat al-Qasr*).

⁷⁷ Al-Bundari, 67, 88, 94-5, 120-1, 131; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 524; cf. Richards, "Imad al-Din", 136-7. For *istifa* in the Seljukid period, see M. F. Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, edited and translated into English by G. Leiser, (Salt Lake City, 1992), 35. In Fatimid Egypt *diwan al-istifa* served as the Inspection Office. See, G. Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, (Cambridge, 1993), 162-3, 322, 418. For the Mamluk period, see Rabie, 156-7.

by Nur al-Din while serving at the same time as Comptroller (*nazir*) of the college's finances.⁷⁸

Following the death of Nur al-Din, 'Imad al-Din's position became precarious.⁷⁹ It must have been a traumatic experience. For the second time in his life, 'Imad al-Din was forced to seek an uncertain future in a new place. He left Damascus, where he had family and property, and went to Aleppo. But he felt unsafe there and moved to Mosul. From Mosul 'Imad al-Din intended to go Baghdad, where his uncle and a younger brother lived. However, he became seriously ill in Mosul and never reached Baghdad. In Syria 'Imad al-Din found his third patron and a new benefactor—Saladin. The meeting between 'Imad al-Din and Saladin was not coincidental; it took place at 'Imad al-Din's initiative.⁸⁰ 'Imad al-Din and Saladin were not total strangers. According to 'Imad al-Din's own testimony, he had become acquainted with Najm al-Din Ayyub, Saladin's father, during his early career in Iraq while serving the vizier Ibn Hubayra. At that time, Ayyub with his brother, Shirkuh, served as the governors of the town of Takrit in Iraq where 'Imad al-Din's uncle was imprisoned on the orders of the Seljukid Sultan Malikshah.⁸¹ When 'Imad al-Din arrived in Damascus, Ayyub and Shirkuh had already served Nur al-Din in military capacities. In Damascus, 'Imad al-Din approached Ayyub and composed in his honor an eulogizing poem; he was also on friendly terms with Shirkuh and Saladin.⁸² The question is to what extent we should trust 'Imad al-Din's account of his amicable relations with the Ayyubid family prior to his entry into Saladin's service? The background to 'Imad al-Din's familiarity with Ayyub and Shirkuh is tenuous at best: it should be pointed out that 'Imad al-Din's uncle was executed in Takrit. Nonetheless, he exonerates both Ayyub and Shirkuh from any blame for this unfortunate event. It seems

⁷⁸ Al-Bundari, 59, 119-20; Ibn Khallikan, V, 149. The combination of a teaching position with administrative duties had a long tradition in the *madrasa* going back to the establishment of the Nizamiyya in Baghdad. See, Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning", 16.

⁷⁹ Al-Bundari, 159-60.

⁸⁰ Yaqut, *Udaba'*, VI, 2624. For 'Imad al-Din's younger brother, see al-Mundhiri, II, 367-8; Richter-Bernburg, "Funken", XXII(1991), 117-22.

⁸¹ Al-Bundari, 56-7. For 'Imad al-Din's uncle, see Ibn Khallikan, I, 188-9.

⁸² Al-Bundari, 59, 67-8; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 369; Ibn Khallikan, V, 148 (quoting 'Imad al-Din's *al-Barq al-Shami*). For 'Imad al-Din's early relations with the Ayyubid family, see Rabbat, "My Life", 271-2.

that it was very important for 'Imad al-Din to establish that his relations with the Ayyubids had already been good during Nur al-Din's rule. Thus, his entry into Saladin's service was an outcome of his early relations with the Ayyubid family and not an act of opportunism dictated by the precarious conditions in which he found himself following Nur al-Din's death. Whether 'Imad al-Din's account is based on solid fact, or is merely a tendentious retrospective embellishment of the events, or even pure invention, remains hard to settle. There are some characteristic parallels between Yaquṭ's version of Qadi al-Fadil's entry into the service of the Ayyubids and 'Imad al-Din's version of his early relations with them. Both tried to explain their shift of loyalties in favorable terms. While Qadi al-Fadil's shift of loyalties was a radical one, 'Imad al-Din had less of a need to explain his behavior; after the death of one Sunni ruler he entered into the service of another Sunni ruler both of whom he manifestly admired.

'Imad al-Din's path into Saladin's service was not smooth; his opponents tried to prevent his nomination to Saladin's Chancery. However, 'Imad al-Din was not a novice in struggles in the corridors of power; his experience and acumen told him to secure the goodwill of Qadi al-Fadil who, however, was not easily accessible. 'Imad al-Din was fortunate in finding a person willing to intercede on his behalf with Qadi al-Fadil. This was Ibn Masal who was influential with both Saladin and Qadi al-Fadil. When 'Imad al-Din and Qadi al-Fadil became acquainted they found they spoke a common language, and Qadi al-Fadil's advocacy was instrumental for 'Imad al-Din's entry into Saladin's service. 'Imad al-Din's merits, as pointed out by Qadi al-Fadil, were evident: his command of Persian and his knowledge of the internal affairs of Nur al-Din's state. Qadi al-Fadil showed no objection to the employment of 'Imad al-Din in Saladin's Chancery.⁸³

'Imad al-Din's relations with Qadi al-Fadil remained amicable throughout the whole period of their employment in the service of Saladin. In his writings, 'Imad al-Din refers to Qadi al-Fadil as *wahid al-zaman* (one [of his] time) chosen by God and the Sultan.⁸⁴ The impression gained from 'Imad al-Din's writing is of

⁸³ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 633, 641-2 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

⁸⁴ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 241, 242, (quoting 'Imad al-Din's *Kharidat al-Qasr* and his obituary note on Qadi al-Fadil).

admiration and gratitude to Qadi al-Fadil.⁸⁵ In 572/1176-1177, 'Imad al-Din accompanied Saladin on a journey to Egypt where he enjoyed the hospitality of Qadi al-Fadil, who made his stay a pleasant and memorable event.⁸⁶ The geographical separation between 'Imad al-Din, who most of the time was in Damascus, and Qadi al-Fadil in Egypt and the fact that they were not competitors for posts and Saladin's favor smoothed relations between them. In contrast to Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din was an experienced administrator and he served Saladin in Damascus in administrative capacities. In 571/1175-1176, he was also responsible for hearing grievances at the Palace of Justice. In addition to his administrative duties, 'Imad al-Din accompanied Saladin on his campaigns. 'Imad al-Din died on the 1st of Ramadan 597/4 Juny 1201, in Damascus and was buried in a Sufi cemetery.⁸⁷

II. For the purpose of the present study, the most important work among 'Imad al-Din's historical writings is *al-Barq al-Shami* (*the Syrian Lightning*), which covers the years 562-589/1166-1193. Only two of its volumes have survived in a manuscript form, but many other passages are known through quotations by later historians.⁸⁸ This work was abridged by Fath ibn 'Ali al-Bundari under the title *Sana al-Barq al-Shami*. The opening sections of *Sana* include 'Imad al-Din's statement that he began to work on *the Syrian Lightning* following Saladin's death fearing that the name of Saladin might fall into oblivion. 'Imad al-Din explicitly states that his intention is to provide an account of his knowledge of Saladin, his relations with him and the services he rendered him. 'Imad al-Din explains that his work will include the history of Saladin's family prior to their arrival to Syria, how he himself entered into Saladin's service and the record of Saladin's life year by year.⁸⁹ Ibn Khallikan in his

⁸⁵ For example, 'Imad al-Din mentions that Qadi al-Fadil helped him to secure an adequate financial support from Saladin. See, al-Bundari, 212.

⁸⁶ Al-Bundari, 236; Richter-Bernburg, "Funken", XXII(1991), 128-31.

⁸⁷ Al-Bundari, 198-9; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi, (Hyderabad, 1952), VIII, pt.2, 505.

⁸⁸ For a detailed examination of these two volumes, see H.A.R. Gibb, "Al-Barq al-Shami: The History of Saladin by the Katib 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 52(1953-1955), 93-115. Before 'Imad al-Din began to work on *al-Barq al-Shami* he had already finished the writing of a chronicle dealing with the victory at Hittin and the subsequent conquest of Palestine and Syria by Saladin.

⁸⁹ Al-Bundari, 52-3.

description of *the Syrian Lightning* faithfully recorded 'Imad al-Din's statement on the objectives of his work. Ibn Khallikan says that 'Imad al-Din began work on *the Syrian Lightning* during his retirement following Saladin's death. The first part of this ten-volume work consisted of a description of 'Imad al-Din's own career in Iraq and Syria under Nur al-Din as well as references to the circumstances which led him to withdraw into private life.⁹⁰

Modern scholars who have studied *the Syrian Lightning*, speak of it as 'Imad al-Din's memoirs.⁹¹ This characterization is not an exaggeration. Autobiographical references are quite common in the *Barq* and *Sana*—they appear at the beginning of the work and as a part of the narrative. 'Imad al-Din's scattered autobiographical remarks reveal a high degree of complacency. 'Imad al-Din was proud of his talents and accomplishments and conveys this to his readers. He summarizes his position vis-à-vis Saladin by declaring that "my pen was at all times a partner of his sword".⁹² Elsewhere, 'Imad al-Din says that the pen is his armament, and only through his pen were Saladin's armies mustered.⁹³ These sayings reflect 'Imad al-Din's view of himself; he saw himself as belonging to the clerical class—a group distinct from the military. How 'Imad al-Din views these two different segments of society is best exemplified by his own words and deeds. In 574/1178-1179, 'Imad al-Din was asked to execute a prisoner-of-war, but he declined to do so by explaining that his calling is the pen not the sword.⁹⁴ No less telling are 'Imad al-Din's words. He characterizes Baha' al-Din Qaraqush, a leading member of the military class of Saladin's period, the builder of Cairo's fortifications and the defender of Acre, as a Turk who had neither knowledge of books nor famil-

⁹⁰ Ibn Khallikan, V, 150, 152.

⁹¹ For example, L. Richter-Bernburg characterizes *the Syrian Lightning* as: "'Imad al-Din's memoirs" in which "long poems and epistolary exchange of a sometimes very private character repeatedly interrupt the context of the historical narrative". See, his "Observations on 'Imad al-Din's al-Fath al-Qussī fi 'l-Fath al-Qudsī", in *Studia Arabica and Islamica*, Festschrift for Ihsan 'Abbas, (ed) W. al-Qadi (Beirut, 1981), 376, and "Funken", XXII(1991), 135-6. See, also Richards, "'Imad al-Din", 141, 144; Rabbat, "My Life", 267-9, esp., 283-4, n.1.

⁹² Al-Bundari, 53; cf. Richards, "A Consideration", 49.

⁹³ See, *Al-Fath al-Qussī fi 'l-Fath al-Qudsī*, (ed) C. de Landberg (Leiden, 1888), 483.

⁹⁴ Al-Bundari, 308. For a detailed discussion of these views of 'Imad al-Din and his personality, see Richter-Bernburg, "Funken", XXII(1991), 130-2; Rabbat, "My Life", 282-3.

ilarity with literature. In contrast to 'Imad al-Din, Ibn Khallikan had a better perspective of Qaraqush: he says that Saladin and Islam owed him much.⁹⁵ The lines of distinction between the military class and the civilian elite were many and visible. The military class was composed of Kurds and Turks while the civilian elite consisted mostly of Arabs and Iranians. Ethnic differences paralleled a linguistic divide and positions in the social hierarchy: rulers vis-à-vis those ruled. These differences were compounded and made visible by distinctive ways of dressing.⁹⁶

H.A.R. Gibb, who studied 'Imad al-Din's writings extensively and with emotional involvement, asserts that the "impression of vanity and self-importance on the writer's part (i.e. 'Imad al-Din)", is mistaken. Gibb is also very positive in his evaluation of 'Imad al-Din's qualities as a historian and regards his writings as the best source for Saladin's life. Gibb's esteem of 'Imad al-Din as an historian is also shared by others. For example, D. S. Richards, a more dispassionate student of 'Imad al-Din's writings, characterizes the treatment of Saladin in *the Syrian Lightning* as free from hagiographical tendencies, and he finds that: "his (i.e. 'Imad al-Din's) egotism is not distasteful".⁹⁷ Nonetheless it is a partisan account written by an adherent and admirer. Among the group of Saladin's historians-admirers, 'Imad al-Din was in a far closer contact with Saladin than Qadi al-Fadil who stayed in Cairo, and the period he had served Saladin was much longer than that of Ibn Shaddad.⁹⁸ However, during the critical years 1169-1171, 'Imad al-Din was in Damascus serving as the head of Nur al-Din's Chancery. The loss of the volumes of *the Syrian Lightning* dealing with those years is most unfortunate. It would have been very interesting to read how the events of those years were later portrayed by 'Imad al-Din, with

⁹⁵ Ibn Khallikan, IV, 92; followed by Safadi, (eds) M. 'A. Bakhit and M. al-Hiyari, (Beirut, 1993), XXIV, 223. See, also al-Bundari, 234; Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 686.

⁹⁶ For instance, Ibn al-'Adim says (III, 1258) that Saladin's son, al-Malik al-Muhsin (born in 1181), occupied himself with religion and learning. This statement is emphasized by the observation that he abandoned military attire in favor of the dress of the men of religion and learning. See, also Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 724.

⁹⁷ Richards, "Imad al-Din", 133, 144; "A Consideration", 49; H. A. R. Gibb, "The Arabic Sources for the Life of Saladin", *Speculum*, 29(1950), 60.

⁹⁸ On one occasion 'Imad al-Din secured Saladin's permission to be absent from a campaign and on two other campaigns he felt sick, missing most of the action. See, Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 697; Richards, "Imad al-Din", 138-40.

the help of hindsight, and within the declared aim of *the Syrian Lightning*—to preserve the fame of Saladin. The surviving fragments of ‘Imad al-Din’s writings dealing with those years are not a substitute for the original text in its entirety. Al-Bundari in his abbreviation of *the Syrian Lightning* extracted from the ornate narrative of ‘Imad al-Din excerpts dealing with historical events. As with any other recension, we are dependent on the editor for his selection. Al-Bundari’s text is laconic; ‘Imad al-Din’s rich style was sacrificed to the goal of lucidity and brevity. This approach has its price; ‘Imad al-Din’s interpretation of and comments on the events he deals with are obliterated. Thus, al-Bundari’s recension while very useful is of restricted value only.

c. *Ibn al-Shaddad*

In contrast to ‘Imad al-Din, who joined Saladin when his personal circumstances were at a very low ebb, Ibn Shaddad entered into Saladin’s service at the peak of his career. Ibn Shaddad was born on 10 Ramadan 539/5 March 1145, in Mosul, into a family of Shafi‘i jurists. Following the premature death of the father, Ibn Shaddad was raised by his maternal uncle and educated in his native town specializing in the seven canonical variant readings/recitations of the Koran. His first recorded appointment was as a *mu‘id* (a teaching assistance who repeats the lecture given by the professor) at the Nizamiyya in Baghdad.⁹⁹ In 569/1173-1174, after four years as *mu‘id*, Ibn Shaddad was appointed as *mudarris* at the newly established law college in Mosul.¹⁰⁰ Ibn Shaddad and Saladin met in 1188. At that time Saladin’s achievements—the victory at Hittin and the conquest of Jerusalem—had made him a legend in his own lifetime and Ibn Shaddad was his admirer. He composed for Saladin a book on Holy War and need little persuasion to accept an offer to serve Saladin as a military judge and an official responsible for jurisdiction (*hukm*) in Jerusalem. The posts conferred on Ibn Shaddad reflect his solid legal education. Ibn Shaddad—certainly if we contrast him to Qadi al-Fadil and even if we compare him to ‘Imad al-Din—was more a jurist than man of letters. In contrast

⁹⁹ The technical terms pertaining to learning and education in medieval Islam are discussed in the various works of G. Makdisi and more recently by J. Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*, (Princeton, 1992), 40-2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Khallikan, VII, 86-7.

to 'Imad al-Din's famous anthology of poets and poetry, *Kharidat al-Qasr wa-Jaridat Ahl al-'Asr*, which exemplifies his interest in and penchant for *belles-lettres*, Ibn Shaddad's scholarly output is dominated by works related to the law.¹⁰¹

For our purposes, Ibn Shaddad's most important work is his biography of Saladin which is divided into two parts. It is—in the words of Richards—a hagiographical work aiming to portray an “exemplary life”.¹⁰² The first part enumerates Saladin's virtues and the second is a chronicle of his life and deeds. For the period during which Ibn Shaddad served and accompanied Saladin on his campaigns (1188-1193), his biography is based on a first-hand knowledge of the events. For the early career of Saladin, Ibn Shaddad's information is of secondary importance only. He must have relied on other works or on oral information. The first part seems to be an improved, extended and better organized version of Ibn 'Asakir's biographical note on Nur al-Din. As the title of Ibn Shaddad's work indicates—*the Rare (Qualities) of the Sultan and the Merits of Yusuf*—the author makes no distinction between the private and the public facets of Saladin's life. The opening sentence of the essential part of the text says: “I have seen the days of our Lord and Sultan, the Victorious King, the one who unified the cause of the belief and suppressed the worshippers of the crosses, the one who raised the banner of justice and kindness, Salah al-Dunya wa'l-Din, Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Deliverer of Jerusalem from the hands of the polytheists, the Servant of the two Holy Shrines, Abi 'l-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Ayyub ibn Shadhi”.¹⁰³ The man and the Sultan are identical entities. Ibn Shaddad identifies Saladin with his titles, which are not just epithets but a reflection of his actions and embodiment of his personality. Ibn Shaddad is very systematic in his exposition of Saladin's virtues. The section dealing with Saladin's religiosity begins by mentioning the Five Pillars of Islam, and proceeds by giving examples how Saladin fulfilled the duty of stating the formula of the creed, praying, alms-giving, fasting during Ramadan and the

¹⁰¹ Ibn Shaddad, *Al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyya wa-'l-Mahasin al-Yusufiyya*, (ed) J. al-Din al-Shayyal (n.p., 1964), 85, 86-7; Ibn Khallikan, VII, 88.

¹⁰² “A Consideration”, 51.

¹⁰³ Ibn Shaddad, 3. For the appellation “worshippers of the cross” and its uses, see Pouzet, 319.

pilgrimage.¹⁰⁴ The other virtues of Saladin referred to are his justice and his personal involvement in hearing grievances.¹⁰⁵ Ibn Shaddad describes Saladin's noble conduct, his courage, fortitude, mental strength, firmness and calm, his forbearance and his devotion to the Holy War.¹⁰⁶ Until this point Ibn Shaddad's text tallies with that of Ibn 'Asakir. But Ibn Shaddad describes Saladin as endowed also with *hilm* and *muruwwa*.¹⁰⁷ Both terms have a long history going back to pre-Islamic Arabia and acquired a wide range of meaning referring to personal virtues such as justice and moderation (*hilm*) and political wisdom (*muruwwa*).¹⁰⁸

Ibn Shaddad's enumeration of Saladin's virtues must be examined against a wider literary context; that of Ibn 'Asakir's biography of Nur al-Din and 'Imad al-Din's chapter on Saladin's virtues included in his *al-Fath al-Qussi fi 'l-Fath al-Qudsi*, a chronicle dealing with the battle of Hittin, the conquest of Palestine and Syria and the Third Crusade. 'Imad al-Din begins by describing Saladin's commitment to and involvement in the Holy War. But the main characteristic of 'Imad al-Din's narrative is its personal character: Saladin is depicted as a person and individual. 'Imad al-Din dwells on Saladin's manners and modesty, he wore simple clothes and men of religion with whom he associated himself felt in his presence as though they were sitting with one of their colleges (literally brother) and not with the Sultan.¹⁰⁹ Saladin was generous with everybody: people of his immediate circle, emirs and administrators, people of religion as well as simple folk. 'Imad al-Din's text is rich in examples of Saladin's magnanimity quoting events and describing Saladin's dealings with certain people.¹¹⁰

But perhaps the greatest importance of these accounts by Ibn Shaddad and 'Imad al-Din is that they deal with Saladin's religiosity. Ibn Shaddad says that Saladin believed in Resurrection, Hell and Paradise. He disliked philosophers, materialists (*dahriyyun*) and *mu'attila* i.e. those who deny God's attributes. And for the benefit of Saladin's young sons the central tenets of religious beliefs

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Shaddad, 7-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 13-6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 17-8, 19, 21-3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 28-30, 31-4; cf. P. M. Holt, "The Virtuous Ruler in Thirteenth-Century Mamluk Royal Biographies", *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 24(1980), 28-9.

¹⁰⁸ Ch. Pellat, "Muru'a", *E.I.*2, VII, 636-8; "Hilm", *E.I.*2, III, 390-2.

¹⁰⁹ See, *Fath*, 479-80.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 481-2.

were formulated in the form of a creed (*'aqida*) by Qutb al-Din al-Nisaburi, who was a leading Shafi'i jurist in Damascus of the Zengid and Ayyubid periods.¹¹¹ 'Imad al-Din's description is a little more elaborate. He begins by saying that Saladin was a Shafi'i in his legal school and he studied law from men of religion and jurists. He used to attend sessions of Prophetic traditions, but he disliked astrologers, logicians and philosophers, and expelled those who introduced innovations (*bida'*) in religious rites. He believed in the unity of God (*tawhid*) and relied on God only (*tawakkul*).¹¹² Both authors depict Saladin's personal religiosity in accordance with what can be described as the Sunni orthodoxy of the age. For example, the materialists are referred to by Ibn al-Qifti, author of the Ayyubid period and a renowned biographer of savants, as heretics.¹¹³ To what extent the references to Saladin's religiosity are determined by the inner religious world of his historians-admirers and their intentions to portray his religiosity as conforming to orthodoxy is difficult to ascertain. The differences between the accounts of 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad lie more in their literary form than in their content. Ibn Shaddad's text is a learned systematic exposition of an impersonal character while 'Imad al-Din's text is more emotional, personal and eloquent.

d. *Ibn al-Athir*

I. It is common to regard Ibn al-Athir as representing the Zengid point of view which was hostile to Saladin who, following the death of Nur al-Din, had deprived them of their patrimony. Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233), a native of Mosul, spent most of his time in the town and its environs moving in the Zengid ruling circles. From 1211, Zengid rule in Mosul was supplanted by Atabeg Badr al-Din Lu'lu', a former military slave (*mamluk*) of the Zengids. Ibn al-Athir as well as members of his family enjoyed the patronage of Badr al-Din Lu'lu' who died in 1259. According to Douglas Patton, Ibn al-Athir's renowned universal history (*al-Kamil fi 'l-Ta'rikh*) was commissioned by Lu'lu'.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibn Shaddad, 7, 10. For Qutb al-Din, see Pouzet, index.

¹¹² See, *Fath*, 484.

¹¹³ G. E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*, (Chicago, 1969), 329-330.

¹¹⁴ See, his *Badr al-Din Lu'lu' Atabeg of Mosul, 1211-1259*, (Seattle, 1991), 5-7, 67.

It remains elusive whether Ibn al-Athir had ever met Saladin or members of his inner circle such as Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad. Two of Ibn al-Athir's works are pertinent to the study of Saladin: the history of the Atabegs of Mosul (*al-Ta'rikh al-Bahir fi 'l-dawla al-Atabakiyya*) and the universal history. The history of the Atabegs of Mosul was completed in 1211 or 1219, and includes a long and detailed eulogy of Nur al-Din which, as P. M. Holt has shown, was influenced by Ibn Shaddad's biography of Saladin.¹¹⁵ Ibn al-Athir's universal history has a complex textual history: its first version was completed by the end of the twelfth century and revised and up-dated between 1223 and 1231 when it abruptly ends.¹¹⁶ Ibn al-Athir's account of Saladin, in the universal history, is harshly judged by Gibb who maintains that while relying on 'Imad al-Din's *the Syrian Lightning* Ibn al-Athir rewrote it with a malicious twist. His conclusion is based upon a comparison of Ibn al-Athir's version of the events concerning Saladin in the universal history with the two extant manuscript volumes of *the Syrian Lightning* covering the years 1177-1180 and 1182-1184. Nonetheless, only one direct quotation from *the Syrian Lightning* has been attested to in Ibn al-Athir's universal history by Gibb. For some reason, Gibb assumes that Ibn al-Athir's account of the years 1169-1171 is not derived from 'Imad al-Din.¹¹⁷

II. In regard to Gibb's views on the way that Saladin has been treated by Ibn al-Athir the following points should be taken into consideration. 1) Since both historical works of Ibn al-Athir (*Bahir* and *Kamil*) were written after the conclusion of 'Imad al-Din's *the Syrian Lightning*, there is no valid reason to accept Gibb's assumption that Ibn al-Athir's account of the years 1169-1171 is indepen-

¹¹⁵ See, his "Saladin and his Admirers: A Biographical Reassessment", *BSOAS*, XLVI(1983), 236.

¹¹⁶ D. S. Richards, "Ibn al-Athir and the Later Parts of the *Kamil*: A Study of Aims and Methods", in *Medieval Historical Writings in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, (ed) D. O. Morgan (London, 1982), 80. For Ibn al-Athir's ambitious goals in writing *al-Kamil* and its structure, see Ahmad, 89.

¹¹⁷ Gibb, "The Arabic Sources", 65-6. Gibb has demonstrated also other deficiencies of Ibn al-Athir's narrative. Ibn al-Athir's use of the history of Damascus by Ibn al-Qalanisi for the first half of the twelfth century is highly problematic in terms of accuracy, and Ibn al-Athir distorts some of Ibn al-Qalanisi's accounts. See, his "Notes on the Arabic Materials for the History of the Early Crusades", *BSOAS*, 7(1933-1935), 746-53.

dent of 'Imad al-Din. Ibn al-Athir could have used 'Imad al-Din for the years 1169-1171 too.¹¹⁸ 2) Ibn al-Athir did collect information and sources quite independently of 'Imad al-Din. In both works of Ibn al-Athir there are many accounts based on oral information.¹¹⁹ For example, the man who was instrumental in the proclamation of Friday sermons in Egypt in the name of the Abbasids was personally known to Ibn al-Athir.¹²⁰ And the account of Nur al-Din's death is related on the authority of his personal physician.¹²¹ Therefore, the divergence between the works of 'Imad al-Din and Ibn al-Athir is not necessarily a reflection of Ibn al-Athir's distortion of 'Imad al-Din; it could have been a result of different and independent sources.¹²² 3) Hostility to Saladin does not discredit outright Ibn al-Athir's commentary on Saladin's deeds and motives. For the modern student of Saladin a non-partisan account might prove very valuable.¹²³ 4) A comparison between Ibn al-Athir's accounts in the history of the Atabegs and the universal history reveals that the narrative in the universal history is more hostile to Saladin. In the universal history Saladin is always portrayed in a worse light than in the history of the Atabegs. 5) However, hostility to Saladin did not permeate the whole of Ibn al-Athir's writings. The following example can serve as an illustration for the different ways Saladin is treated by Ibn al-Athir. In his account of Shirkuh's third campaign in Egypt, Ibn al-Athir quotes Saladin as saying: "Allah gave me a possession of what I had not coveted". Ibn al-Athir's informant was a person very close to Saladin.¹²⁴ The general context within which this saying appears is Saladin's reluctance, reported by Saladin himself, to take part in the third campaign to Egypt. Saladin contrasts his reluctance with the ultimate outcome of the campaign. Perhaps Saladin

¹¹⁸ According to Richards, 'Imad al-Din completed the writing of *the Syrian Lightning* toward the end of the twelfth century, i. e. a long time before Ibn al-Athir put the last touches to his universal history. See, "A Consideration", 60.

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of Ibn al-Athir's use of oral information, see Ahmad, 90.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Ta'rikh al-Bahir fi 'l-Dawla al-Atabekiyya*, (ed) A. A. Tolaymat (Cairo, n. d.), 156.

¹²¹ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 582.

¹²² For instance, see the careful and illuminating discussion of such an example by Lyons and Jackson, 406, n.40.

¹²³ Such an example is discussed by Humphreys, see *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 58-9.

¹²⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi 'l-Ta'rikh*, (ed) C. J. Tornberg, (Leiden, 1867-1871), XI, 226; *Bahir*, 141.

was indeed reluctant to participate in the third campaign, and certainly the results of this campaign were beyond his expectations. But Saladin's saying is not only a record of his mood at that time, it serves a purpose. Saladin's aim is to portray himself as a man who is not avid for power. His fortunes were ordained by God in spite of his own reluctance and he is merely a tool of God's will. By using this account, Ibn al-Athir propagates in fact Saladin's self-created image, hardly a hostile service.

Upon reading of this account one feels that Ibn al-Athir perhaps was not indifferent to Saladin's achievements against the Crusaders, which were undeniable and already brought him fame in his lifetime. He provides a balanced evaluation of Saladin's military problems when fighting the Crusaders. For example, Ibn al-Athir describes the deliberations of Saladin's war council before the battle of Hittin. Some of the emirs suggested avoiding a large-scale battle with the enemy and advocated instead waging a war of attrition against the Crusaders by constantly raiding their territories. In their opinion this type of warfare would be also instrumental in silencing those voices blaming Saladin for conducting war against Muslims instead the Crusaders. However, Saladin was in favor of an all-out battle. Ibn al-Athir is more critical of Saladin when he assesses his failure to conquer Tyre, in the wake of his victory at Hittin. He says that Saladin allowed the population of the towns conquered by him after Hittin to go to Tyre. The people there were ready to surrender the town, but the arrival of Conrad de Montferrat and his leadership inspired the population to resist Saladin. Ibn al-Athir says that Saladin abandoned the siege of Tyre as a result of his policy of not getting involved in long sieges against towns which vigorously defended themselves. Saladin's emirs also demanded the cessation of the siege due to lack of provisions, money, heavy losses, weariness and the onset of the winter. After some hesitation Saladin yielded to his emirs. Basically, Ibn al-Athir criticizes Saladin for bad judgment (lack of *hazm*) regarding Tyre. But, later in his account, he presents in sober terms Saladin's dilemma whether to engage or not to engage the Crusading armies which were converging on Acre.¹²⁵

However other fragments of Ibn al-Athir's writings are tainted

¹²⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 351, 359, 368-9, XII, 21-2. I am grateful to Anne-Marie Eddé, who draw my attention to these accounts of Ibn al-Athir.

with more overt hostility to Saladin. Toward the end of the account of Saladin's nomination as the Fatimid vizier, Ibn al-Athir inserts his own observations on how dynasties rise to power. He adduces many examples from Islamic history to show that the founders of dynasties were unable to pass on their rule to their own sons. The beneficiaries were other members of the family who assumed power and transferred rule to their progeny. The Ayyubids fall into this pattern. Rule (*mulk*) passed from Shirkuh to Saladin who established the state (*dawla*) and expanded it, but eventually power was transferred to his brother and to his progeny. Ibn al-Athir remarks that at the time he was writing only Aleppo was in the hands of Saladin's offspring. Ibn al-Athir points out that the founder of a dynasty as well as his immediate family are preoccupied with gaining power. For this reason Allah denies him and his progeny rule as an act of punishment.¹²⁶ On the one hand, Ibn al-Athir puts the Ayyubids on the same footing as the Umayyids, Abbasids, Buyids and other great Islamic dynasties and states. On the other hand, Saladin himself is compared to other founders of dynasties whose absorption with establishing their rule incurred the wrath of God. Ibn al-Athir implies that the establishment of rule is associated with the shedding of blood and violence and therefore the founders cannot enjoy the fruits of their endeavors. The roots of this concept are Biblical, but it serves Ibn al-Athir's purpose well. In contrast to Saladin's historian-admirers who depict him as unselfish warrior of the Holy War and upholder of Sunni Islam, Ibn al-Athir portrays him as a man greedy for power. And he, like others, is punished for the way he had gained power.

These various accounts reflect the inconsistency and complexity of Ibn al-Athir's narrative. Manipulation of history was not foreign to Ibn al-Athir nor was he above it. In his universal history, Ibn al-Athir successfully obfuscated the fact that Badr al-Din Lu'lu' usurped power from the legitimate rulers of Mosul, the Zengids.¹²⁷ Therefore, each account of Ibn al-Athir that deals with Saladin must be examined on its own merits. In many cases Ibn al-Athir's bias against Saladin is not evident, or—to put it more cautiously—

¹²⁶ *Al-Kamil*, XI, 227-8. This interesting passage is discussed by Tarif Khalidi (see 217) whose English rendering of the text is a mixture of translation and interpretation. The original text is far more enigmatic than Khalidi's rendering shows. He also ignores the context which for his purposes is less important.

¹²⁷ Patton, 5, 14.

is not detectable to us because of our restricted understanding of the system of values which guided twelfth/thirteenth-century historians.

e. *Ibn Abi Tayy and Abu Shama*

The two most important historians in the generations immediately after Saladin are Ibn Abi Tayy (approximately 1179-1232) of Aleppo and 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Isma'il Abu Shama (1203-1268) of Jerusalem. Ibn Abi Tayy was born into a leading Shi'ite family in Aleppo. Sunni historians provide scanty biographical data about him.¹²⁸ Like many of his contemporaries, Ibn Tayy was a prolific writer with interest in many subjects. His historical works dealt not only with Aleppo, but also with Egypt and North Africa. He wrote the histories of Saladin and his son al-Zahir as well as an universal history. In Aleppo, as Claude Cahen noted, Ibn Abi Tayy had an opportunity to meet many notables from late Fatimid and early Ayyubid Egypt and to collect information from them.¹²⁹ Ibn Abi Tayy supplies very important information about Saladin, however none of his works have survived. He is known only from citations by later historians such as Abu Shama and Ibn Furat (1334-1405) who have transmitted many fragments of his writings in their own works.¹³⁰

It is important to examine how Abu Shama approached and used Ibn Abi Tayy's works. Ibn Abi Tayy is extensively quoted by

¹²⁸ The dates concerning Ibn Abi Tayy are given according to Kutubi (d. 1363). But his entry on Ibn Abi Tayy is dull including a long list of his works and some uncomplimentary remarks on his literary output. See, his, *Fawat al-Wafayat*, (ed) I. 'Abbas (Beirut, 1973), IV, 269-71. Ibn al-'Adim (1193-1262), the great Sunni historian of Aleppo, rarely refers to Ibn Abi Tayy. See, Morray, 96, n.393. The available data on Ibn Abi Tayy have been studied by Cl. Cahen in his *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des Croisades*, (Paris, 1940), 55-7. Sunni historians, among them Ibn Qalanisi, Ibn al-'Adim and especially Ibn al-Athir, distorted also the events and essence of the Shi'ite rebellion in Aleppo under Nur al-Din. See, H. M. Khayat, "The Shi'ite Rebellion in Aleppo in the 6th A.H/12 A.D. Century", *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 46(1971), 184-5.

¹²⁹ See, his "Quelque chroniques anciennes relatives aux derniers Fatimides", *BIFAO*, XXXVII(1937), 17-8.

¹³⁰ Fragments of Ibn Abi Tayy's writings, as quoted by Ibn Furat, have been utilized in two studies by Cahen. See, "Une chronique chiite au temps des Croisades", *Comptes rendus de l'Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles lettres*, 1935, 259-63; *Orient et Occident au temps des Croisades*, (Paris, 1983), 222-3. See, also Khayat, 167-95.

Abu Shama who at least once refers to his biography of Saladin. Abu Shama has reservations about Ibn Abi Tayy's impartiality. According to him, Ibn Tayy was hostile to Nur al-Din who subdued the Shi'ites in Aleppo. This notion is shared by modern scholars, too.¹³¹ But, as Gibb pointed out, hostility to Nur al-Din did not entail hostility to Saladin.¹³² It seems that Abu Shama failed to notice the niceties of Ibn Abi Tayy's different approach to Nur al-Din and Saladin. For example, Abu Shama disputes Ibn Abi Tayy's account about the enmity between Nur al-Din and Saladin which developed following Saladin's conquest of Egypt. Abu Shama says that Ibn Abi Tayy's version is motivated by hostility to Nur al-Din. However, Abu Shama's accusation of Ibn Abi Tayy on this score is groundless. The enmity between Nur al-Din and Saladin is reported also by Ibn al-Athir who is certainly not a hostile source to Nur al-Din. Abu Shama, as the title of his chronicle suggests (*the Book of the Two Gardens. The History of the Two Dynasties that of Nur al-Din and Saladin*), is an admirer of both rulers. Thus his remarks about Ibn Abi Tayy must be understood in the light of his effort to maintain the image and fame of both rulers and regimes.

Abu Shama's method for dealing with a certain event is to quote the accounts of several historians. To a large extent his handling of these accounts is uncritical. However, the assertion that Abu Shama "does not comment" on his sources must be qualified.¹³³ Abu Shama do express his views. Sometimes he introduces such comments by the phrase: "I say" (*qultu*).¹³⁴ On other occasions, he provides an account of a certain event, or a short statement, without quoting any authority for it. Such accounts and statements should be understood as his own independent views. Therefore, when using and quoting Abu Shama, a clear distinction should be made between the passages cited by him on the authority of other historians and his own independent narrative. In his independent views, Abu Shama is inclined to accept the accounts of

¹³¹ Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 441-2; Khayat, 180. Abu Shama's quotation of Ibn Abi Tayy's biography of Saladin begins on page 415 and it seems to continue up to page 443. See, I, pt,2.

¹³² See, his "The Achievements of Saladin", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 35(1952) reprinted in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, (Boston, 1962), 92.

¹³³ Ahmad, 93.

¹³⁴ The interruption of the narrative by the phrase *qultu* is a common technique in the writings of late medieval authors. See, Khalidi, 201.

Saladin's historian-admirers. Nonetheless, from the point of view of the present study, the value of Abu Shama's work is immense. Abu Shama provides long accounts taken from works which otherwise have not survived. In contrast to Abu Shama, Ibn Wasil (d. 1298), another well known historian of the Ayyubid period, rarely quotes his sources and for the years 1169-1174 he provides little new or important information.

In addition to Abu Shama's chronicle *the Book of the Two Gardens*, some attention should be given to his own abridgment of this work entitled '*Uyun al-Rawdatayn min Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*'.¹³⁵ In it no sources are cited. Essentially, this work repeats information found in the full chronicle, but it has its own value too. From the point view of the modern user it is easier to obtain from '*Uyun* the gist of Abu Shama's narrative, which in the full chronicle is frequently obfuscated by redundancies. Free of redundancies, some of the accounts in '*Uyun* have a quite different tenor, almost a different essence, than in *the Book of the Two Gardens*.

f. Maqrizi

Among the historians of the Mamluk period the most important for the present study is Maqrizi (1364-1442). The value of Maqrizi's writings for the study of the Fatimid history is well known; his various works are a mine of information on Fatimid Egypt. The most essential work is his three-volume chronicle *Itti'az al-Hunafa'*... which deals exclusively with Fatimid history. A. S. Ehrenkreutz was the first to utilize *Itti'az* (then available in manuscript form only) for the study of Saladin. Today with the publication of this huge work a better analysis of the text is possible. Unfortunately, by contrast to his practice in the early parts of *Itti'az*, in the late parts Maqrizi does not cite his sources. Judging from his *Khitat*, a work dealing with the topography and history of Egypt and Fustat-Cairo in particular, Maqrizi was familiar with Qadi al-Fadil's chronicle *Mutajjaddidat*. This work is cited many times for the events of the years 567-594/1171-1197.¹³⁶ This leaves open the question of what were the sources used by Maqrizi for the events of 1160's. Apparently,

¹³⁵ See n.61.

¹³⁶ A. R. Guest, "A List of Writers, Books and other Authorities Mentioned by El-Maqrizi in his *Khitat*", *JRAS*, (1902), 110, 125.

Maqrizi was familiar with Qadi al-Fadil's letters (*rasa'il*). For instance, Maqrizi's version of the Battle of the Blacks, in *Itti'az*, closely follows Qadi al-Fadil's report of these events sent to Nur al-Din in Damascus. Maqrizi also uses 'Umara's autobiography, devotes much attention to 'Umara's connections with the ruling circles of the Fatimid period and quotes his poetry.¹³⁷

Syrian authors are little used by Maqrizi. 'Imad al-Din is sparsely mentioned in *Khitat*, and the work quoted is not the original—the *Syrian Lightning*—but Bundari's abridgment. Ibn Abi Tayy is also rarely quoted.¹³⁸ But, occasionally, some illuminating items of information provided by Maqrizi prove to be derived from quite unexpected sources. A point in case is an account of Ibn Jawzi, a twelfth-century historian of Baghdad, reproduced by Maqrizi without naming his source.¹³⁹

Maqrizi's account of the closing years of the Fatimid period is worth reading. In contrast to Abu Shama, who combined in his narrative extracts from different historians and his own independent statements, Maqrizi provides an integrative account. Its main value lies in the light it sheds on Saladin's policy toward the Fatimid state from the day of his nomination as the vizier of al-'Adid until the death of the Fatimid ruler. No less important is Maqrizi's account of the years 1172-1198. Maqrizi relying on Qadi al-Fadil's *Mutajaddidat* supplies (in *Khitat* and *Suluk* a chronicle dealing with the Mamluks which also includes a section on the Ayyubids) the most significant information on Saladin's internal policies in Egypt. It is true that this information is not full and systematic, but it touches upon a whole range of Saladin's policies.

¹³⁷ For the history of 'Umara in Egypt and his poetry, see Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 224-8, 249-52, 259-60. For Maqrizi's use of 'Umara's autobiography, see 225 (= 'Umara, 32), 226 (= 'Umara 34, here Maqrizi omits 'Umara's reference to al-Hafiz as Imam al-Hafiz), 227 (= 35-6, but in Maqrizi's text the payment that 'Umara received is incorrectly quoted), 228 (= 38), 249-50 (= 44), 251 (= 49), 252 (= 48), 253 (= 53), 254 (= 54), 259 (= 68, here Maqrizi repeats 'Umara's saying that the fall of the Ruzzik family brought about the fall of the Fatimids).

¹³⁸ Guest, 111, 119.

¹³⁹ See, ch.2, n.2.

3. *Textual Problems: Tendentious and Conflicting Versions*

The aim of this section is to show how the different perspectives of Saladin's historian-admirers and that of Ibn al-Athir shaped their accounts. This will be done by examining some of the main events of the years 1167-1171 such as Nur al-Din's expedition to Egypt in 1167, the killing of Shawar, the election of Saladin as the Fatimid vizier and the proclamation of Abbasid suzerainty in Egypt. In Chapter Two, using other sources, these incidents will be re-examined in order to provide another more independent perspective on the events under discussion.

a. *The Campaign of 1167*

The sources for the 1167 campaign are particularly problematic. At the time that Shirkuh and Saladin were campaigning in Egypt, 'Imad al-Din had just arrived in Damascus in search of employment. His knowledge of the events unfolding in Egypt must have been quite limited, and he was preoccupied with his own personal affairs. Nonetheless, when 'Imad al-Din wrote *the Syrian Lightning* he was able to command all the relevant sources. Unfortunately, for this campaign, we only have at our disposal extracts from his original writings as provided by later authors. Qadi al-Fadil, although well placed to be familiar with the inner thoughts of Shawar and his extended family ¹⁴⁰, is not quoted by Abu Shama or any other historian as a source for the events under review. Ibn Shaddad, the third of Saladin's historian-admirers, cannot be regarded as an independent source for these events. His account is derived from oral information and sources he obtained during the time he had served Saladin.

The most detailed and coherent account is provided by Ibn al-Athir. No hostile bias against Shirkuh or Saladin is evident. For example, the Battle of Babayn is viewed by Ibn al-Athir as a remarkable victory and Saladin's deeds during this campaign are recorded in sober terms without any detectable prejudice. In fact, one should note what seems to be a strange difference of opinion between 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad regarding the background to Nur al-Din's expedition to Egypt in 1167. 'Imad al-Din

¹⁴⁰ Lyons and Jackson, 11-2.

condemns Shawar for his alliance with the Franks and regards him as responsible for inviting the Crusaders into Egypt.¹⁴¹ 'Imad al-Din leads his readers to view Nur al-Din's intervention in Egypt as aimed to counter Shawar's shameful cooperation with, not to say betrayal of Egypt to, the infidels and therefore as fully justified. Surprisingly, Ibn Shaddad put Shirkuh's campaign of 1167 in a completely different context. He says that Shirkuh upon his return from the first campaign in Egypt did not conceal his desire to invade Egypt again. Thus he left Shawar with no choice but to seek the help of the Franks.¹⁴² One gets the impression that Ibn Shaddad attaches no disgrace to Shawar's cooperation with the Crusaders, which he depicts as a move dictated by considerations of *realpolitik* in view of Shirkuh's hostile intentions. The differences between these two versions can be explained as a result of 'Imad al-Din's admiration of Nur al-Din. 'Imad al-Din strives to portray Nur al-Din as motivated by noble and not worldly considerations. While Ibn Shaddad detached from the milieu of Nur al-Din's Damascus in which 'Imad al-Din lived and flourished is more impartial. He puts Nur al-Din's intervention in Egypt into a more realistic context. The preparations in Damascus for the second expedition to Egypt are attested to by other historians as well.¹⁴³

b. *The Killing of Shawar*

Nur al-Din's third campaign in Egypt was crowned with success. The Crusaders left Egypt and Shirkuh became the Fatimid vizier. His rise to power was expedited by the killing of Shawar. Ibn al-Athir says that Nur al-Din's force in Egypt feared Shawar knowing his extreme wickedness. This statement serves as a background for Ibn al-Athir's account of the conspiracy hatched by some of Shirkuh's emirs, led by Saladin and 'Izz al-Din Jurdik, to kill Shawar. But, Shirkuh refused to authorize their actions. Nonetheless, they, without the consent of Shirkuh, took advantage of attendant circumstances and killed Shawar. Ibn al-Athir recounts that on one

¹⁴¹ Al-Bundari, 63.

¹⁴² Ibn Shaddad, 37-8; repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 367.

¹⁴³ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, IX, 213; *Bahir*, 132; William of Tyre, *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, translated into English and annotated by E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (N. Y., 1943), II, 313-4; cf: Elisséeff, *Nur al-Din*, II, 602, who says that the initiative for the campaign was that of Shirkuh.

of his regular visits to the Syrian camp Shawar missed Shirkuh who had left earlier. The conspirators arrested Shawar and at al-ʿAdid's demand put him to death.¹⁴⁴

Although Saladin is not portrayed in this account in a bad light, it is hardly a convincing narrative. One gets the impression that Ibn al-Athir's version strives above all to exonerate Shirkuh from any blame for the killing of Shawar. ʿImad al-Din, in his account of these events, says that Saladin spoke with Shirkuh about the need to eliminate Shawar. But Shirkuh disapproved of Saladin's intentions and even sent his confidant, ʿIsa al-Hakkiri, to warn Shawar who, however, chose to ignore the warning. One day, when Shawar was riding in a procession displaying the symbols of his post and might, Saladin and the emirs seized him. However, the actual killing of Shawar was carried out only on al-ʿAdid's demand.¹⁴⁵

We are constrained in our understanding of the subtleties of the accounts given by Ibn al-Athir and ʿImad al-Din by our limited knowledge of the contemporary twelfth-century system of political values. For instance, would contemporary readers of either historian hold it against Saladin that he was involved in the conspiracy which led to the killing of Shawar? Ibn Shaddad who certainly had no intention of casting any shadows on Saladin's personality praises his role in the arrest of Shawar. He says that when the conspirators approached Shawar only Saladin was bold enough to seize him.¹⁴⁶ Thus we are incline to believe that by the standards of the time Saladin's initiative and involvement were seen in a positive light and there was no moral stain attached to his behavior. The first immediate conclusion is that the accounts by Ibn al-Athir and ʿImad al-Din have a common aim: to absolve Shirkuh, who was the direct beneficiary of the killing of Shawar, from any responsibility for the deed. Both authors make every effort to deny that Shirkuh's rise to the post of vizier was a result of regicide. We can conclude that in their view regicide was repugnant.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ See, his *Kamil*, IX, 223-4; *Bahir*, 139-40.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Bundari, 77-8; repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 398.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Shaddad, 40.

¹⁴⁷ How historians of the Abbasid period dealt with the question of regicide is examined by T. El-Hibri. See, his "The Regicide of the Caliph al-Amin", *Arabica*, XLII (1995), 334-64. The question of regicide was an important issue in the Mamluk period. For the killing of Qutuz and the rise of Baybars, see P. Thorau, *The Lion*

In any case the aim of the plot was merely to neutralize Shawar, his death was the result of al-ʿAdid's demand. ʿImad al-Din and Ibn al-Athir portray the conspirators as powerless in the face of a request made by the formal ruler of the country. The impression conveyed by these accounts is that the conspirators had to play by Fatimid political norms. Contemporary twelfth-century historians, Muslims and Franks, have emphasized that by Fatimid political standards ascendancy to the post of vizier by overthrowing and killing the former vizier was an accepted practice.¹⁴⁸

A possible insight into the implicit political values to which the historians of the period referred can be gained by borrowing terms common in Muslim jurisprudence and ethics. These classify human actions into five categories starting with duties whose fulfillment by the believer is obligatory (*fard/wajib*) and descending to actions which are expressly forbidden (*haram*). In the middle there are duties whose fulfillment by the believer is merely recommended (*mandub*). Other actions are viewed as neutral (*mubah*) while others are disapproved although not legally forbidden (*makruh*). In light of this classification, the role of Saladin in the plot against Shawar, from which he gained nothing directly, can be described as neutral (*mubah*) or, according to Ibn Shaddad's version, even *mandub*.

The congruity of the accounts of Ibn al-Athir and ʿImad al-Din regarding the killing of Shawar can be explained by their admiration of Nur al-Din. Shirkuh was a high-ranking officer in the service of Nur al-Din; his immoral behavior thus stains the reputation of his master, which was precious to both of them and had therefore to be protected. It seems to me that it is possible to infer from the accounts of Ibn al-Athir and ʿImad al-Din the impression that they strived to convey to their readers when they recounted these events. The plot was justified. Shirkuh's behavior was noble and he had nothing to do with the killing of Shawar. Saladin's

of Egypt, translated into English by P. M. Holt (London, 1992), 83-4. The relevant sources are examined by P. M. Holt. See, his "Some Observations on Shafi' ibn 'Ali's Biography of Baybars", *JSS*, XXIX (1984), 123-30; "Three Biographies of al-Zahir Baybars", in *Medieval Historical Writings*, 20-7. For a wider treatment of this topic, see U. Haarmann, "Regicide and Law of the Turks", in *Intellectual Studies on Islam*, (eds) M. M. Mazzoui and V. B. Moreen (Salt Lake City, 1990), 127-35.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Shaddad, 36, 40; repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 398; William of Tyre, II, 305.

actions were reasonable or even laudable while the direct responsibility for Shawar's death lies with the Fatimid Imam.

c. *The Nomination of Saladin as Vizier*

'Imad al-Din's account of the election of Saladin as Fatimid vizier is succinct and straightforward. He admits that the emirs of Nur al-Din's expeditionary force were divided over the nomination of Shirkuh's successor. Eventually, however, they unanimously decided to chose Saladin and they compelled al-'Adid to accept their selection. Ibn Shaddad adds nothing new to this account. He says simply that following Shirkuh's death Saladin was entrusted with authority.¹⁴⁹

In contrast to these terse accounts, Ibn al-Athir provides a detailed description of the circumstances that led to the election of Saladin as Fatimid vizier. A number of emirs in the expeditionary force had ambitions to command the force and to be nominated as Fatimid vizier. However, al-'Adid appointed Saladin knowing that he was the youngest and the weakest among the emirs with no military following of his own, thus easy to control. The Fatimids hoped that the nomination of Saladin would create a rupture within the ranks of the expeditionary force that would play into their hands. Only through the efforts of 'Isa al-Hakkiri did the emirs accept the selection of Saladin as vizier.¹⁵⁰ Ibn al-Athir's hostility to Saladin is evident; he depicts Saladin as an insignificant person who owed his appointment to a heretic, the Fatimid ruler—an Isma'ili Imam. These two diametrically opposed narratives give the impression that these events were more complex and shadowy. The brevity and simplicity of the accounts given by 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad is as suspicious as Ibn al-Athir's hostile version.

d. *The Battle of the Blacks*

The single most important event in Saladin's rise to power in Egypt was the Battle of the Blacks. There is a rare unity of opinion among our sources regarding the events that led to it. Mu'tamin, a black

¹⁴⁹ Al-Bundari, 81; Ibn Shaddad, 40; repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 406.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, IX, 226-7; *Bahir*, 141-2.

eunuch of al-ʿAdid, who was the strong man behind the throne, wrote to the Crusaders urging them to attack Saladin's forces in Egypt. The plot was discovered due to the vigilance of one of Saladin's men who became suspicious of a certain person because of an mismatch in his attire. When arrested he turned to be Mu'tamin's messenger who had carried letters to the Crusaders. The messenger led his investigators to a Jewish scribe who had written these letters. Under the pressure of interrogation and torture, the Jew embraced Islam and incriminated Mu'tamin as the man behind the letters. Saladin duped him by keeping quiet about his knowledge of the plot. After a time, as Mu'tamin left Cairo for his country residence he was attacked and killed. His killing sparked off the Battle of the Blacks.

Perhaps we are being unduly suspicious, but the way these events are represented by the historians of the period inspires little confidence. The combination in one account of a despised black eunuch who holds the reins of power behind an Ismaʿili heretic and uses a Jewish infidel to conspire with the Crusaders, a religious enemy, is too much to swallow. The unmasking of a suspected person due to some mismatch in his attire is a literary convention if not a *topos*.¹⁵¹ We can not escape feeling that the sole purpose of these accounts is to justify the war Saladin waged on the Blacks. Our sources, with the exception of Ibn Abi Tayy, represent the Sunni point of view. And the fact that Ibn Abi Tayy was a Shiʿite does not mean that he is sympathetic to the Ismaʿilis. All of the historians under consideration share anti-Imaʿili bias, for them the Fatimids are heretics capable of the worst treachery. Therefore, the story of the plot must be approached with great caution.

e. The Proclamation of Abbasid Suzerainty

Ibn al-Athir's hostility to Saladin is very evident in his account of the circumstances which led to the proclamation of Abbasid suzerainty in Egypt. Furthermore, in this case, we can observe an

¹⁵¹ For example, this motive appears in the biography of Ahmad ibn Tulun, the ninth-century semi-independent ruler of Egypt. Balawi, his biographer, tells a story of how Ahmad unmasked an Abbasid spy by noting an expensive item in the attire of a certain person which did not match his supposed low social standing. See, *Sirat Ahmad ibn Tulun*, (ed) M. K. ʿAli (Damascus, 1939), 124-5. For the Battle of the Blacks, see Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 228-9; al-Bundari, 82-3.

evolution in Ibn al-Athir's hostility as reflected by the significant difference between the account in his earlier work, the history of the Atabegs, and his later work, the universal history. In the history of the Atabegs, Ibn al-Athir says that when the position of al-'Adid was undermined, and the Fatimid army destroyed, Nur al-Din ordered Saladin to change the sermons in favor of the Abbasids. Saladin refrained from doing so as he was afraid of the possible reaction of Isma'ili sympathizers in Egypt. Only when al-'Adid fell ill, did Saladin seize the opportunity to introduce a change in the sermons. In any case, Ibn al-Athir states explicitly that Saladin was determined to carry out the change, but his explanations for the delay failed to convince Nur al-Din.¹⁵² In the universal history Ibn al-Athir's outlook is radically different. Saladin's delay was an outcome of his basic reluctance to destroy the Fatimid state. His motives were sinister; Saladin hoped that the existence of the Fatimid regime will help him in the event of Nur al-Din's military attempt to dislodge him from Egypt.¹⁵³

Up to certain point Ibn al-Athir's narrative in the universal history is coherent. Saladin is depicted as a minor officer in Nur al-Din's expeditionary force who owes his nomination as vizier to al-'Adid in whom he sees a potential ally against his overlord Nur al-Din. But when examined as a whole, the narrative is beset by internal contradictions. For example, Ibn al-Athir faithfully records those of Saladin's deeds which were aimed at the elimination of Ismailism in Egypt such as the foundation of law colleges and the removal of Isma'ili judges. He also records Saladin's policies against the Fatimid state: the Battle of the Blacks and the undermining of al-'Adid's position. He leaves unresolved the contradiction of how the feeble al-'Adid could have helped Saladin to withstand Nur al-Din's possible invasion of Egypt.

To conclude: the writings of the historians examined in this chapter cannot be treated as repositories of uncomplicated data for the history of Saladin. The contradictions among the sources are not of the kind that close reading of the texts and a critical approach can solve. The differences are a result of different perspectives which are basically mutually exclusive. The sources are

¹⁵² Ibn al-Athir, *Bahir*, 156.

¹⁵³ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, IX, 241-2. Unfortunately, in the fragments of 'Imad al-Din's writings, as quoted by late sources, no explanation is given for the delay in changing the sermons.

tainted as they belong to different historical traditions and present two different portraits of Saladin. The works of Gibb and Ehrenkreutz reflect this division. The modern student of Saladin must be aware, and must make his reader aware, of these two different pictures of Saladin. Two further points ought to be made: 1) none of these two different historical traditions is entirely uniform and cohesive. Internal contradictions within each one of these traditions do exist. 2) There are external data for the history of Saladin. Contemporary documents, inscriptions and information which emanate neither from the writings of the historian-admirers of Saladin nor from Ibn al-Athir. Such information is limited but enlightening and must be systematically collected and used (see next chapter).

CHAPTER TWO

SALADIN IN EGYPT, 1169-1174

1. *Saladin's Rise to Power*

a. *The Sick Man on the Nile*

I. Nur al-Din's interest in Fatimid Egypt predates the arrival of Shawar to his court in Damascus in 1164. It seemed in the early 1050's that the Fatimid state was on the brink of internal disintegration. On 6 Muharram 548/3 April 1153, the military vizier Ibn Salar was killed by Ibn 'Abbas, his stepson. Following the killing of the vizier, a group of emirs loyal to him fled to Damascus.¹ As a result of the conspiracy against the vizier, Ascalon was lost to the Crusaders. The killing of Ibn Salar prevented the dispatch of an army to relieve Ascalon which was besieged by the Crusaders from January 1153. The Fatimid navy which reached the town was unable alone, without the assistance of the ground forces, to prevent the fall of the town (August 1153). A year later (end of Muharram 549/mid April 1154), the Fatimid Imam al-Zafir, together with his brothers, was killed by Ibn 'Abbas. Nonetheless, Fatimid rule in Egypt continued with the installation of al-Zafir's five-year-old son as the Imam under the regal name of al-Fa'iz. At this grave moment in the Fatimid history, as on earlier occasions during Fatimid rule in Egypt, women of the royal family were instrumental in maintaining the dynasty in power. Al-Zafir's sister, Sitt al-Qusur, staged a coup against Ibn 'Abbas using for this purpose a provincial governor, Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik. With his nomination as vizier, 19 Rabi' I 549/3 June 1154, the Fatimid state regained a degree of political stability.

These events were carefully watched in Baghdad. With the seizure of Damascus by Nur al-Din (April 1154), a new alignment of power emerged in northern Syria. The Abbasid caliph did not waste time: he issued to Nur al-Din a diploma of investiture proclaiming him as ruler of Egypt and urging him to act swiftly.² But with the consolidation of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's position the hopes for a quick successful intervention in Egypt were dashed. Nonetheless

¹ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 205.

² Ibn Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Ta'rikh al-Ummam wa-'l-Muluk*, (Beirut, 1992), XVIII, 98; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 223.

Nur al-Din's interest in Egypt did not evaporate, he approached Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik on several occasions adopting the posture of a champion of the Holy War and trying to galvanize the Fatimid vizier into action against the Crusaders. At the time that Nur al-Din approached Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, the Fatimids were entangled in complex military and diplomatic relations with the Crusaders. In 549/1154-1155, the town of Tinnis badly suffered from an attack by a Sicilian fleet. In 550/1155-1156, Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik launched a naval raid on Christian shipping off the Palestinian coast. The background and the motives behind this Fatimid naval activity are not entirely clear. It is tempting to see it as retaliation for the raid on Tinnis; the Fatimids—unable or unwilling to attack Sicily—chose targets closer to their borders. But Ibn Qalanisi (1073-1160), the historian of Damascus, puts the Fatimid naval activity in a different context. He says that Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik wished to pay the Crusaders tribute and to establish a truce with them, but his emirs refused to contribute the money. Eventually, it was decided in Cairo to take military action. The naval raid that took place in 1155-1156 was a very successful one bringing much booty to the raiders.³ Nonetheless, following this raid, at some unknown date, a truce between the Fatimids and the Crusaders was signed. However, in Rajab 552/August-September 1157, this truce was abrogated by the Fatimid rulers. The abrogation of the truce seems unconnected with the arrival in Cairo of Nur al-Din's emissaries. In 552/1157-1158 and in 553/1158-1159, Fatimid naval and land forces fought the Crusaders and parallel diplomatic exchanges between Cairo and Damascus intensified. In 553/1158-1159, the Crusaders asked for a truce while Nur al-Din, in letters and poetry brought to Cairo by his emissaries, exhorted Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik to fight the Holy War. The Fatimid vizier responded by sending to Damascus a consignment of weapons, goods worth of 30,000 *dinars* and 70,000 *dinars* in cash to assist Nur al-Din in his Holy War.⁴ In 554/1159-1160, Nur al-Din made an attempt to

³ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq*, (ed) H. F. Amedroz (Leiden, 1908), 331-2; Ibn Muyassar, 153; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 207, 224. Apparently, the naval raid took place in summer 1155.

⁴ Ibn al-Qalanisi reports on Fatimid land and naval activity against the Crusaders and on exchange of emissaries with Damascus under the records of the years 553/1158-1159 and 554/1159-1160. See, 351, 353, 356. See, also Ibn Muyassar, 155, 156; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 230, 233-4.

introduce a new dimension into the Syrian-Egyptian relations: he proposed to Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik launching a coordinated attack on the Crusaders. The vizier's response was hesitant; the Fatimid army was moving toward Gaza but did not engage the Crusaders. Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik was in convenient position: he was approached by both sides. Nur al-Din offered him gifts and the Crusaders asked for a renewal of the truce.⁵

From 1161, internal problems came again to dominate Fatimid politics. In fact, Fatimid involvement in wars against the Crusaders and diplomatic contacts with Damascus extended over a short period of time between 550-554/1155-1160 only. In 1162, the rule of the Ruzzik family as Fatimid viziers was terminated by Shawar, who was named the new vizier on 12 Muharram 558/21 December 1162. Eventually, Shawar was ousted from Cairo and sought refuge in Damascus at the court of Nur al-Din (1164). The arrival of Shawar in Damascus marks the beginning of Nur al-Din's direct involvement in the affairs of Egypt. Ibn 'Asakir's depiction of Nur al-Din's first campaign in Egypt as a sort of favor to Shawar intended to restore him to his previous post is untenable. The first campaign in Egypt was the culmination of Nur al-Din's growing interest in the affairs of Fatimid Egypt. The people in power in Egypt, the viziers and the Fatimid Imams, were fully aware of this tendency and Nur al-Din came to exert some influence on

⁵ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 236; cf. A. F. Sayyid, *Al-Dawla al-Fatimiyya fi Misr. Tafsir Jadid*, (Cairo, 1992), 216-8. I am grateful to Paula Sanders of Rice University, Houston, who drew my attention to Sayyid's book. In his poetry Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik anguished over Latin rule in Jerusalem and the desecration of the Muslim holy places. See, P. Smoor, "Poet's House: Fiction and Reality in the Works of the Fatimid Poets", *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, 10(1992), 52, 53-4; Dajani-Shakeel, "Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry: A Moral and Religious Force to Counter the Crusades", *MW*, 66(1976), 110. However, Dajani-Shakeel's claim that Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik initiated a policy of *jihad* for the conquest of Jerusalem is difficult to accept. It is true that Fatimid military activity on land and sea was considerable and costly: between 100,000 to 200,000 *dinars* were spent on it. However when these actions are examined it is clear that no conquest of territory, and certainly not of Jerusalem, was intended. These were merely raids. See, Ibn Muyassar, 156-7; Nuwayri, *Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab*, MS Leiden, Or.2k, ff, 229B, 231B. For Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's regret at the way he mishandled his military effort against the Crusaders, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 81. For a very careful and realistic assessment of Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's involvement in the Holy War against the Crusaders, see Dadoyan, 162-4.

Fatimid ruling circles.⁶ A case in point is Nur al-Din's intervention on behalf of Usama ibn Munqidh. Usama entered Nur al-Din's service following his escape in 1154 from Egypt, where he left his family. Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik offered Usama the governorship of Aswan. But Usama rejected the proposition due to his unwillingness to leave again his Syrian homeland (*awtan* pl. of *watan*) for Egypt. Eventually, through Nur al-Din's intervention and threats Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik allowed Usama's family (about fifty people including family members and household) to leave for Damascus. The ship on which they sailed was wrecked off Acre and all their belongings were looted by the Franks. However, the king of Jerusalem provided them with 500 *dinars*, a very substantial sum of money, and they reached Damascus safely.⁷

In contrast to the cautious approach of Nur al-Din (prior to 1164) toward military intervention in Egypt, the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem had no hesitation in sending its armies to Egypt. In 1163, the Crusaders were campaigning in Egypt. The direct reason for the expedition was Shawar's refusal to pay Jerusalem the annual tribute of 33,000 *dinars*, which was agreed by Tala'i' Ibn Ruzzik.⁸ In Shawwal 558/September-October 1163, after a victory over a Fatimid force, the Crusaders besieged Bilbays. Although the Crusaders overrun a section of the wall they failed to conquer the town.⁹ Nur al-Din did not send army to Egypt to assist in fighting the Crusaders. Whether his move against the fortress of Harim in Syria was aimed to distract the Crusaders from Egypt is not clear.¹⁰ One must take into account the difficulties in sending armies from Damascus to Egypt. Geography was certainly on the side of the Crusaders: it facilitated the dispatch of their armies to

⁶ Ibn 'Asakir (ed), Elisséeff, 138-9, MS, XVI, 295, ll, 4-5. It is interesting to note that both al-'Adid and Shawar shortly after assuming their offices sent robes of honor to Nur al-Din. See, Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 245, 260.

⁷ Usama ibn Munqidh, *Kitab al-I'tibar*, (ed) P. K. Hitti (Princeton, 1930), 34; English translation by P. K. Hitti, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusaders*, (Princeton, 1930); Abu Shama, I, pt.1, 248.

⁸ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 259.

⁹ *Ibid*, III, 262; William of Tyre, II, 302.

¹⁰ Ralph-Johannes Lilie sees a connection between these two events; see his *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, translated into English by J. C. Morris and Jean E. Ridings (Oxford, 1993), 190. It is true that in August 1164, the Crusaders suffered a defeat at the hands of Nur al-Din. However, according to the Arabic sources, they left Egypt after the siege of Bilbays. Thus the connection between these two events remains ambiguous.

Egypt while making this difficult for Nur al-Din. Judging from subsequent events, the Crusaders did not consider the campaign of 1163 to be a failure or a warning against undertaking future military actions in Egypt.

II. Our sources (especially Ibn Abi Tayy and occasionally also Ibn al-Athir) explain the involvement of Nur al-Din and the Crusaders in the affairs of Egypt in economic and strategic terms. Both powers coveted Egypt for themselves and made every effort to prevent their adversary from gaining a foothold in the country. Following the initial involvement of Damascus and Jerusalem in the affairs of Egypt, both capitals became aware of the political and military weakness of the Fatimid state. The conquest of Egypt seemed to the Crusaders as well as to Nur al-Din to be a feasible undertaking within their reach.¹¹ The combination of Egypt's economic potential and internal weakness also lured Byzantium into showing growing interest in the affairs of Egypt. Greek sources bear witness to the wish of the emperor Manuel I to intervene in Egypt.¹² There is no reason to doubt an explanation emphasizing economic and strategic motives as lying behind the involvement of foreign powers in the affairs of the Fatimid state. Egypt was a country with a viable economy; abundant agriculture and booming trade. Both Shawar and al-ʿAdid made promises to Nur al-Din to share with him the economic resources of Egypt. For instance, when Shawar appealed for Nur al-Din's aid he promised him one third of the tax-revenues of Egypt; the other two thirds were supposed to be divided between Shawar himself and al-ʿAdid.¹³ Al-ʿAdid, in his turn, made an even better offer: in addition to one third of the Egyptian tax-revenues he promised to Nur al-Din to cover the full expenses of Shirkuh's army in Egypt.¹⁴ Undoubtedly Nur al-Din expected considerable gains from his intervention in Egypt. Abu Shama's candid remark that when Shirkuh went to Egypt in 1164 he was determined to conquer the country and

¹¹ Al-Bundari, 74; Ibn al-Athir, *Bahir*, 121; Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 364; Ibn Furat, IV, pt,1, 20.

¹² Niketa Choniata, *O City of Byzantium*, translated into English by H. J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1984), 91; William of Tyre, II, 348.

¹³ Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 418, 420 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy); Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 196; Nuwayri, f, 233A.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Bahir*, 138-9, 140; Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 391.

annex it to Nur al-Din's territories can be accepted without any reservations.¹⁵ Conveniently from Nur al-Din's point of view, the conquest of Egypt tallied also with the main political and cultural trends of his age such as the Holy War, fighting Shi'ism and upholding the authority of the Abbasid Caliph.

Economic considerations were a powerful motive behind the actions of Jerusalem, too. When Shawar invited the Crusaders to Egypt to counter Shirkuh, he paid them in cash. According to the Mamluk historian Nuwayri (1279-1332), the payment was as high as 400,000 *dinars*. In general the Crusaders were well informed about Egypt's economical potential. They gathered economic intelligence and possessed a list of Egyptian villages and the incomes derived from them.¹⁶ The intention of the Crusaders to tap the agricultural wealth of Egypt caused Shirkuh great concern. In 1167, he agreed to leave Egypt on condition that no troops of the Kingdom of Jerusalem would be allowed to stay in villages in Egypt. This is a very telling piece of information which reveals the military implications of control of rural areas. The Muslim and Crusader armies were maintained by a system of allocating land, or income from land, in return for military service. Indirect control of villages (i.e. the ability to derive income from them) and certainly direct control, meant that the side which achieved it was able to expand its military base by attracting additional military manpower. It must be remembered that, according to the agreement of 1167, a Frankish garrison was left in Cairo and an annual payment of 100,000 *dinars* was promised to the Crusaders. Apparently this aspect of the agreement between the Fatimids and Crusaders concerned Shirkuh less.¹⁷

The question that must be asked is why the Crusaders (who had geography on their side) failed in their efforts to control Egypt while Nur al-Din was ultimately successful? In military terms the

¹⁵ See, his *ʿUyun*, I, 261.

¹⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 421, 430 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy); Nuwayri, f, 234A. For the different promises of Amalric to his vassals and allies and how they influenced the timetable and the course of King's actions, see H. E. Mayer, "Le service militaire des vassaux de Jérusalem à l'étranger et le financement des campagnes en Syrie du Nord et en Égypte au XII^e siècle" in his *Mélanges sur l'histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem*, (Paris, MCMLXXXIV), 140-58; Lilie, 309-20.

¹⁷ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 366; *ʿUyun*, I, 282; Nuwayri, f, 235A; cf: Sayyid, 226-8.

Crusaders were the equals of the Syrians and superior to the Fatimid army. But, the Crusaders made two colossal mistakes. The first was the decision of Amalric to invade Egypt (October 1168) without enlisting any local help.¹⁸ It should be stressed that Amalric's reluctance to cooperate with Byzantium, in spite of the negotiations that were being conducted at that time between these two Christian powers of the Eastern Mediterranean, had no direct effect on the outcome of his invasion of Egypt.¹⁹ As later events were to prove, at the siege of Damietta, Byzantine naval assistance was not of itself enough to ensure the conquest of the town. Christian naval superiority alone was not sufficient to subdue Egypt. For example, during the 1169 invasions of Egypt, the ground forces of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem were assisted by some ships which entered Nile through the mouth of the river at Tinnis. But the advance of this squadron was blocked by a barrier of ships hastily erected by the Fatimids.²⁰ As John H. Pryor has recently shown, in naval operations in the delta only a fleet especially designed to sail in shallow water is of any use.²¹ A pre-requisite for assembling such fleet is some awareness, which is not self-evident, of the problems involved. There are no indications that the Crusaders or Byzantines planned the naval aspects of their intended invasion of Egypt with much attention to this problem. Therefore, in 1169, only a successful land campaign could have achieved the conquest of Egypt. However, without any local Egyptian allies, Amalric's army was too small for this purpose.

Amalric's second mistake occurred in the course of his invasion. Unrestrained by commitments to local allies and collaborators the Crusaders massacred the population of Bilbays during the conquest of the town. Contemporary Jewish sources tell a grim story of the fate of those who survived the massacre. They were

¹⁸ Ibn Furat (IV, pt.1, 21, quoting Ibn Khallikan) and Nuwayri (f, 235B) say that some Egyptians emirs corresponded with Jerusalem. But there are no indications that Amalric was assisted by local allies.

¹⁹ The shifts in the attitudes of both Byzantium and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem toward military cooperation for the conquest of Egypt have been examined by Lilie and need no elaboration. See, 198-200, 309-15. For the Byzantine side, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, (Cambridge, 1993), 73-5.

²⁰ William of Tyre, II, 353.

²¹ See, his "The Crusade of Emperor Frederick II, 1220-29; The Implications of the Maritime Evidence", *The American Neptune*, (1992), 113-31.

put by their Frankish captors on sale in the slave-markets of Palestine. According to Nuwayri, the retreating Crusaders took away with them as many as 12,000 captives.²² It is unclear whether this carnage was a calculated act of terror, or whether the Crusading army was simply undisciplined and its troops went on rampage on their own. When towns were conquered, the interests of the military leaders of the Crusading armies and those of the simple soldiers clashed. The leaders were interested in an orderly conquest and in restraining their troops while the soldiers hoped for greater gain by killing and looting the conquered population.²³ Whatever the circumstances were that led to the atrocities perpetrated against the population of Bilbays. The message sent to the population of Egypt was a chilly one, and the advance of the Crusaders was watched with horror. If Amalric hoped to gain a foothold in the capital his conduct in Bilbays was counter productive to that aim.

On 12 November 1168, Shawar set Fustat on fire. His motives remain obscure. The poet 'Umara says that what the Franks did in Bilbays necessitated the burning of Fustat, implying perhaps that Shawar wanted to save the population of Fustat from a Frankish bloodbath. Undoubtedly Shawar and others were haunted by the experience of Bilbays. But setting Fustat on fire caused immense suffering; many lost their lives and the material losses were colossal.²⁴ 'Umara's explanation is an apologetic one and cannot be accepted without reservations. It seems that Shawar panicked and overreacted. He was afraid that Fustat would be used by the Crusaders as a springboard for the conquest of Cairo, and his move was a desperate attempt to forestall this possibility.²⁵ Shawar was

²² See, f, 236A. For Jewish sources, see S. D. Goitein, "Geniza Sources for the Crusader Period: A Survey", in *Outremer. Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Presented to Joshua Prawer, (eds) B. Z. Kedar and others (Jerusalem, 1982), 315-6.

²³ William of Tyre, II, 352, 355.

²⁴ 'Umara, 80, 88. Nuwayri (ff, 235A-B, quoting Ibn Muyassar) says that Shawar tried to dig a trench around Fustat: he adds that the refugees from Fustat went to Cairo, Jazira (the island opposite Fustat), and others sailed to Alexandria and Damietta.

²⁵ The issue of burning of Fustat has been examined in detail by W. Kubiak ("The Burning of Misr al-Fustat in 1168. A Reconsideration of Historical Evidence", *Africana Bulletin*, 25[1976], 51-64), who has posed two questions: what were the exact circumstances that led to setting of Fustat on fire and what was the extent of the damage caused by the fire? Kubiak considers Maqrizi's ac-

unduly impressed by the ease with which the Franks conquered Bilbays. Fustat, however, was bigger and with a larger population than Bilbays, and Cairo was protected by walls and massive gates. In addition, considerable military forces were stationed in Cairo itself and in military quarters outside the walls. Nonetheless, the conduct of the Crusaders inspired awe and brought Shawar to take irrational steps. Following the burning of Fustat, Amalric was faced with a difficult dilemma: time was not on his side and an all-out attack on Cairo beyond his military means.²⁶ In any case, after some fighting directed against Cairo, the Fatimids were ready to buy off the Crusaders. A sum of one million *dinars* was offered of which 100,000 were actually delivered.²⁷ However, only the arrival of Shirkuh's sizeable force caused Amalric to retreat from Egypt (January 1169).

b. *The Killing of Shawar*

I. Undoubtedly the retreat of the Crusaders strengthened Shirkuh but Nur al-Din's expeditionary force in Egypt was vastly outnumbered by the Fatimid army. It is true that both the Syrians and the Crusaders had a low esteem for the fighting abilities of the Fatimid forces.²⁸ The Fatimid army suffered from two major shortcomings: it consisted mostly of black infantry and therefore its mobility and attacking capability were restricted. Moreover, it lacked internal cohesion. The army was composed of various military corps different in origin, ethnic composition, military specialization and in the character of their troops: military slaves or free-born troops. The fragmentation of the army was an important contributing factor in the internal political destabilisation of the Fatimid state. Notwithstanding the deficiencies of the Fatimid army as a fighting

count in *Khitat* as unreliable on two points: the supposed motives for setting the town on fire and the extent of the damages. Working from a wide range of sources Kubiak expresses doubts regarding the supposed scale of the destruction caused by the fire. He points out that prior to Shawar's fire many parts of Fustat were already in ruins.

²⁶ William of Tyre attributes the failure to conquer Cairo to Amalric's slow advance following the conquest of Bilbays. See, II, 351-4, esp., 353

²⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 222; Nuwayri, ff, 235B-236A.

²⁸ William of Tyre, II, 313-4. In this account William refers to a supposed meeting between Shirkuh and the Caliph in which he made some scornful remarks about the fighting capabilities of the Fatimid army.

force, it enjoyed a massive numerical superiority over Shirkuh's army.

The way to Ayyubid ascendancy in Egypt was opened by the killing of Shawar, the only person who could possibly face Shirkuh. This event provides an unique opportunity to utilize sources not traditionally used in the study of Saladin. The possible benefits of tapping such sources have been demonstrated on two occasions by Richards.²⁹ A chronicle from 1196-1197, the anonymous *Bustan al-Jami'*, published long ago by Cahen, furnishes interesting insights into the conduct of the civilian elite of Alexandria during the period when the town was besieged by Shawar and Amalric. Another example, and a far more significant one, is provided by Ibn 'Asakir's account of the killing of Shawar, cited by Abu Shama. This account has not the slightest resemblance to the other versions discussed in Chapter One. In plain words Ibn 'Asakir says that Shirkuh, with the help of Saladin, set a trap for Shawar who was lured to the Syrian camp to visit the supposedly sick Shirkuh. Upon his arrival, Shawar was overpowered and killed by Jurdik and Barghash, who are described as men in the service of Nur al-Din (literally *mawali*, i.e. his clients or freedmen). Ibn 'Asakir reminds his readers that Shawar was known for his wickedness and cunning. The fact that Shirkuh was responsible for the killing of Shawar is mentioned also in a terse remark that Ibn 'Asakir included in his short and dull, biographical note on Shirkuh.³⁰

A more elaborate account of these events appears in Ibn 'Asakir's biographical note on Nur al-Din. As we have seen Ibn 'Asakir says that when Shawar arrived as a fugitive at Nur al-Din's court he was well treated and the first expedition to Egypt aimed to restore him to his previous position. But Shawar did not keep his promises to Nur al-Din, and enlisted the help of the enemy (i.e. the Crusaders). Nur al-Din sent a second expedition to Egypt, but Shawar paid vast sums of money to the enemy and the Syrian forces had to retreat. The third campaign in Egypt was in response to Amalric's attempt to conquer Egypt. Eventually, the Syrian army remained in Egypt, and its stay—claims Ibn 'Asakir—was received

²⁹ See, his "The Early History of Saladin", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 17(1973), 151-2.

³⁰ 185.Ibn 'Asakir as quoted by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 401; English translation by Richards, "The Early History", 154-5. For Shirkuh's biography, see Ibn 'Asakir, MS, X, 170-1; (ed) 'Amrawi, (Beirut, 1996), XXIII, 284.

with joy and relief by the population. However, Shawar while intoxicated revealed that he had approached the enemy. Ibn 'Asakir creates the impression that this should surprise no one. Shawar, he assures his readers, was known for his wickedness and cunning. Shirkuh set a trap for Shawar by feigning an illness. When Shawar came to pay him a visit, he was killed by Jurdik and Barghash, the *mawali* of Nur al-Din. Saladin is not mentioned as involved in any way in these events. Ibn 'Asakir continues by saying that the killing of Shawar freed the people from his wickedness and paved the way for Shirkuh's rise to power. Shirkuh's men took control of the country and he was invested with a robe of honor (i.e. was nominated as the vizier). Shirkuh governed the country well: Sunni Islam was restored, Abbasid suzerainty was proclaimed in Egypt and civil wars were brought to end.³¹

II. The textual history of Ibn 'Asakir's biographical dictionary has yet to be studied. Judging from internal evidence, it seems to me that the account cited by Abu Shama was written before the paragraph referring to the killing of Shawar in the biographical note on Nur al-Din. In the account cited by Abu Shama, Ibn 'Asakir does not deny that the killing of Shawar was Shirkuh's initiative and carried out by his troops. In total contrast to later accounts there is no hint of al-'Adid's involvement in the killing of Shawar. However, in the biographical note on Nur al-Din, Ibn 'Asakir sets Shawar's killing in context. This is an invented literary context whose aim is to conceal the real context against which the killing of Shawar must be examined. The real context is a brutal struggle for power and a settling of old scores between Nur al-Din and Shirkuh and Shawar. The literary context created by Ibn 'Asakir begins by presenting Shawar as actively conspiring with the enemy, a motif missing altogether from the passage cited by Abu Shama. In light of Shawar's record, the attempt to depict him in a negative light is not a difficult task at all. But Ibn 'Asakir has an aim in doing so: to provide a justification for the killing. The reader is led to see the killing as justified against the background of Shawar's cooperation with the Crusaders and also when judged in light of the beneficial results of Shirkuh's rule in Egypt. The

³¹ Ibn 'Asakir (ed) Elisséeff, 139, French translation, 131; MS, XVI, 295, II, 11-20.

differences between Ibn 'Asakir's version and the versions of later historians are essential. While Ibn 'Asakir tries to justify Shirkuh's involvement they deny it altogether. Denial necessitated the invention of a villain—al-'Adid. In that way their accounts have been further removed from the real context.

The question is why Ibn 'Asakir's biographical note on Nur al-Din makes no mention of Saladin's involvement in the plot? In my opinion, the possible answer is that this omission reflects Ibn 'Asakir's awareness of Saladin's susceptibilities. Ibn 'Asakir's account quoted by Abu Shama was written close to the events and at that time he felt no need to suppress or modify information concerning the plot. From the point of view of Nur al-Din, Shirkuh, and Saladin there was nothing special or shameful in the killing of Shawar, who had a dubious record of cooperation with the enemy, the Crusaders, and heretics, the Fatimid Imam. It is said that the most famous contemporary poet in Egypt urged Shirkuh to kill Shawar. It seems that later, with the rise of Saladin to power, he was not keen on mentioning his role in a regicide whose indirect beneficiary he was. When Ibn 'Asakir wrote the entry on Nur al-Din in his biographical dictionary, he had to take into account Saladin's sensitivities.³² Saladin's historian-admirers, who wrote their works only after Saladin's death, were not sure what stand to take on this issue. They chose to portray him as involved but not responsible for the killing of Shawar for which they blamed al-'Adid.

Quite surprisingly Ibn 'Asakir's version of the killing of Shawar, as quoted by Abu Shama, is corroborated by Ibn Zafir (1171-1226), a historian of the Ayyubid period. Ibn Zafir's father was born in Alexandria in 527/1132-1133. He studied Maliki law and became a teacher at the Qamhiyya law college established by Saladin in Cairo. He died in 1201 bequeathing his position to his son. But Ibn Zafir gave up his teaching career in favor of a position in the

³² However, apparently due to lack of consistency, a difficult task taking into account the vast scale of Ibn 'Asakir's *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, the note on Shirkuh reflects no attention to any possible sensitivity by Saladin. Judging from the style, this passage must have been written after the death of Nur al-Din in 1174, reflecting the period of Saladin's rise to power in Syria. Ibn 'Asakir says that Saladin with divine help restored Sunni Islam in Egypt. He is referred to as al-Malik al-Nasir and the phrase "may Allah prolong his days" is used. See, MS, X, 170-1; (ed) 'Amrawi, XXIII, 284. For poetry urging Shirkuh to kill Shawar, see Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, III, 346-7.

administration. Among his writings there is also a history of the Fatimids.³³ Ibn Zafir says in plain words that on 15 Jumada I 564/14 February 1169, Shawar, while on his way to Shirkuh, was captured by a group of emirs and killed. His brother and three sons were also killed and their heads were publicly displayed.³⁴ Ibn Zafir, as a man of the Ayyubid age, is certainly not hostile to Saladin. However, he did not belong to the circle of Saladin's historian-admirers; he was a younger and less renowned person. But his remoteness from the luminaries of his age had its advantages too.

Among later historians only Ibn Furat echoes to the same extent Ibn 'Asakir's account of the killing of Shawar. Ibn Furat says, without indicating his sources, that Shirkuh was determined to eliminate Shawar and he enjoyed the support of al-'Adid. In a consultation with his officers, Shirkuh said that his ambition to possess Egypt is well known but the Crusaders have the same goal knowing how weak Egypt is. Shawar takes advantage of this situation by playing between the two sides. Following this meeting Shawar was captured by Shirkuh's troops. It was a violent incident in which Saladin distinguished himself. He wished to put Shawar to death, but Shirkuh hesitated. Only the demand made by al-'Adid to kill Shawar brought Shirkuh to authorize the execution.³⁵ Ibn Furat does portray Shirkuh as involved in the plot against Shawar. On this point his account is more in line with that of Ibn 'Asakir than with the accounts given by Saladin's historian-admirers. He, however, like them, blames al-'Adid for the killing.

The most interesting information supplied by Ibn Furat is a fragment of 'Imad al-Din's poetry congratulating Shirkuh on the conquest of Egypt, his nomination as the vizier and the killing of Shawar.³⁶ This tallies very well with Ibn 'Asakir's account as quoted by Abu Shama. Elsewhere in his chronicle Ibn Furat says that Nur al-Din's joy at the achievements of his forces in Egypt turned to anger and apprehension following Shirkuh's nomination as the Fatimid vizier. The question is when could 'Imad al-Din's poetry

³³ Dates concerning Ibn Zafir are given according to Kutubi. See, III, 27. For Ibn Zafir, see A. Freë's introduction to his edition of Ibn Zafir's *Akhbar al-Duwal al-Munqati'a*, (Cairo, 1972).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁵ Ibn Furat, IV, pt.1, 31-2, he also quotes other versions of these events. See, 30-1, 32-3. Nuwayri's account of the killing of Shawar contains no new information. See, ff, 236B-237A, 240B.

³⁶ Ibn Furat IV, pt.1, 45.

have been composed? A similar problem of dating arises in respect of a poem by another Damascene poet, 'Arqala, who composed a poem congratulating Shirkuh on the killing of Shawar and praised Saladin's rise to the vizierate.³⁷ The poems by 'Imad al-Din and 'Arqala suggest that Nur al-Din's suspicion of the Ayyubids in Egypt evolved with the time. Apparently these poems were composed at a time when Nur al-Din harbored no ill feelings toward the Ayyubids, and regarded their achievements in Egypt as his own. Otherwise it is difficult to see how these two poets, who moved in the court circles, could have written what they wrote.

c. *The Betrayal of the Fatimid State*

I. The elimination of Shawar was a very important step toward the consolidation of Shirkuh's position in Egypt, though the vast Fatimid military establishment was little affected by it. Nonetheless according to the letters of appointment of Shirkuh and of Saladin (slightly later) as Fatimid viziers, they were entrusted with absolute political power. These letters testify that the Fatimid state had been defunct before it actually was extinguished by Saladin. The Fatimid army had degenerated and Fatimid civilian administrators had become alienated. In fact, they betrayed and surrendered the Fatimid state into the hands of Shirkuh and Saladin.

The texts of both letters of appointment, which were written by Qadi al-Fadil, are fully reproduced in the literary sources.³⁸

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 47. Ibn al-'Adim says that 'Arqala composed an eulogy in honor of Saladin declaring that Saladin would take Egypt. Saladin on his side promised him a thousand *dinars* if his prediction were realized. Following Saladin's rise to power in Egypt, 'Arqala visited him and reminded him of the promise he had made, but asked to receive the payment in Damascus not in Egypt. The story is interesting but lacks precision in terms of time. See, *Bughyat*, V, 2242. Kutubi (I, 313) says that 'Arqala died in 567/1171-1172 at the age of eighty and the payment promised by Saladin was sent to Damascus. It is highly doubtful if 'Arqala, considering his age, could between 1169-1172 have undertaken the arduous journey from Damascus to Cairo to collect his reward from Saladin.

³⁸ In a short account referring to the Ayyubid rise to power in Egypt, Qalqashandi says that Shirkuh was appointed as vizier by al-'Adid and his letter of nomination was written by Qadi al-Fadil. I understand the phrase: *wa-kutiba lahu* (i.e. to Shirkuh and later Saladin) '*ahd min insha*' Qadi al-Fadil to mean that Qadi al-Fadil was the author of both documents. See, III, 428. When Qalqashandi gives the text of both documents he presents them saying: "a document composed by Qadi al-Fadil on behalf of the Caliph al-'Adid" (*sijjil bi-qalam Qadi al-Fadil sadir 'an al-khalifa al-'Adid*). The preposition '*an*' (with verbs like *kataba* and *ansha*) indicates that letters were written by Qadi al-Fadil on behalf

Both letters are extraordinary documents which have not received the attention they deserve. The essence of the opening paragraphs of Shirkuh's letter of appointment is in line with Fatimid (Isma'ili) traditional phraseology. The common Fatimid claims regarding the attributes of their Imams are re-stated: al-'Adid is described as the servant of Allah and his Friend (*wali*), and as the rightly guided Imam and Commander of the Faithful. Shirkuh is requested to acknowledge these standard Fatimid assertions.³⁹ The document restates the Fatimid pretensions that they are the possessors of the divine light (*nur*), and proof (*hujja*) of Allah on earth. The concept that the Fatimid Imam is essential for the preservation of religion and human existence is powerfully stated: "there is no religion except through him and there is no world except by an association with him".⁴⁰

Shirkuh is addressed as the most Illustrious Lord and the full list of his titles includes the following: the Victorious King, Sultan of the Armies, Friend of the Imam and Glory of the Dynasty. Two titles traditionally associated with Fatimid military viziers (dictators) of the twelfth century—Protector of the Cadis of the Muslims and Guide of the Propagandists of the Believers (i.e. the Isma'ilis)—were also conferred on Shirkuh. And most significantly, Al-'Adid's patronymic, al-'Adidi, was bestowed on Shirkuh as well.⁴¹

In the essential paragraphs of the document it is stated that Shirkuh was appointed as the vizier with responsibility for the management (*tadbir*) of the state and the protection (*hiyata*) of al-'Adid's throne.⁴² Some of Shirkuh's responsibilities are specified in detail and what is expected of him is clearly stated. The document depicts an idealistic (but hardly realistic) picture of relations be-

of somebody else. When Qalqashandi wants to indicate that the letter was composed by Qadi al-Fadil he adds the words *he himself*. See, VII, 90, in contrast to VII, 109. Qalqashandi's terminology reflects that of 'Imad al-Din. See, *al-Barq al-Shami*, MS Oxford, Bruce 11, ff, 16B, 41B, 104B; (ed) R. Sesen (Istanbul, 1979), V, 144, 172. However, 'Imad al-Din avoids the awkward phrase: "he wrote on behalf of himself". He simply omits the proposition 'an from the combination *ansha'* 'an indicating that he himself composed the letter in question. See, *al-Barq*, (ed) Sesen, 23, 36, 54, 67 and *passim*.

³⁹ Ibn Wasil, *Mufarrij al-Kurub fi Akhbar Bani Ayyub*, (ed) J. al-Din al-Shayyal (Cairo, 1957), II, 444, 445.

⁴⁰ Ibn Wasil, II, 444 (last line).

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 443 (first para.).

⁴² *Ibid*, 450.

tween the Fatimid ruler and the army. It states that the army is dependent on the Imam and sustained through his favors. Shirkuh is instructed to treat well all segments of the army: the white and the black corps, the army in Cairo and in the provinces (literally the close and the far-away), the foot soldiers and the cavalry, the archers and those who fight with a lance. Shirkuh is required to pay the troops their salaries (*nafaqa*) and to take care of their grants of land (*iqta's*). He is advised to be generous with the army in order to ensure its loyalty.⁴³ The importance of jurisdiction and propaganda is emphasized, both institutions are described as safeguarding the people from oppression.⁴⁴ A hope is expressed that Shirkuh's just conduct will be instrumental (*wakil*) in expanding the land under cultivation (*'imara*). Shirkuh is also invested with the management of the affairs of the people (*ra'iya*) and with responsibility for conducting the Holy War.⁴⁵

This document gives the illusion that Shirkuh is to act as the Fatimid vizier, within the framework of the Isma'ili state, with the status of a client of the Fatimid Imam bearing his patronymic—al-ʿAdidi. This was quite an absurd presumption but necessary from the Fatimid point of view. In the twelfth century, Fatimid Imams had to come to terms with the rise of independent military viziers who acted as military dictators. The Fatimid Chancery created the impression that these viziers are subordinates of the Imams. The best-documented case is that of Badr al-Jamali, a Muslim Armenian and the first military dictator in the Fatimid state in Egypt (who held power from 1073 to 1094). The patronymic of the Fatimid ruling Imam of that time, al-Mustansir, was conferred on Badr, who was the most powerful man in the country and supported by a private army. The meaning intended was that Badr al-Jamali was al-Mustansir's client.⁴⁶ The precedent of Badr was invoked to accommodate Shirkuh's rise to the vizierate. Nonetheless, al-ʿAdid, in a personal plea to Shirkuh written on the scroll of his letter of appointment, admitted that this letter was unusual in having no parallel in Fatimid history.⁴⁷

Saladin's letter of appointment as Fatimid vizier is an even more

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 451 (last para.).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 452.

⁴⁶ Lev, *State*, 46-8.

⁴⁷ Ibn Wasil, II, 454.

extraordinary document. The letter begins in a traditional way and the most essential points of the Fatimid credo are re-stated. The Fatimid ruler is referred to as Commander of the Believers chosen and guided by Allah. His pivotal role as supporter of Religion and the one who helps people to reach the right path are re-emphasized. The Fatimid claim that the origins of their family go back to the Prophet Muhammad and 'Ali is restated and Saladin is requested to acknowledge this. The document also re-affirms the Fatimid belief that their dynasty is divinely supported and rightly guided.⁴⁸

But the most extraordinary feature of this document is its irreconcilable self-contradiction. On the one hand, Saladin is referred to as one who merely assumes the place of Shirkuh. On the other hand, a remarkable declaration of far-reaching consequences is stated: namely, that Saladin's vizierate is hereditary. The precedent invoked is the hereditary vizierate that was established by Badr al-Jamali. By employing a play on words, the document states that Saladin would outshine Badr's son and successor, al-Afdal.⁴⁹ However, the comparison is a false one. The Fatimid Imam al-Amir was forced to accept the transfer of the post of vizier from Badr to his son al-Afdal while Saladin's letter of appointment gives a priori legitimacy to such a development. Other parts of the document specify Saladin's titles and responsibilities in the manner set out in Shirkuh's letter of appointment.⁵⁰

II. The uniqueness of these two letters of appointment is clearly shown when they are compared to other letters of appointment issued to Fatimid viziers. We shall begin our comparison by examining a letter of appointment from the early eleventh century, which is in every way a different document altogether. But it helps to trace the changes that the institution of the vizier underwent in the twelfth century. The text in question is the letter of appointment given to Abi 'l-Qasim 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Jarjara'i, in Dhu 'l-Hijja 418/December 1027-January 1028. It was written by the head of the Chancery. The language is rich and sometimes cryptic but the essence of the document can be grasped. In

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 455-6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 459, II, 5-6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 460-1.

an absolute contrast to the viziers of the twelfth century, al-Jarjara'i was a civilian vizier and all of his responsibilities were administrative. References to neither judicial nor to military responsibilities appear in the text. Al-Jarjara'i is addressed as the Illustrious Vizier, the Pure One and the Essence of the Commander of the Believers and the recipients of his favors. The vizier is authorized to use these phrases as his titles.

According to al-Jarjara'i's letter of appointment, he was selected by the Fatimid ruler to act as a *safara/wasita*, i.e. a mediator between the ruler and the people. He is entrusted with fiscal and administrative responsibilities and the management of the affairs of all the classes of people; high-ranking and commoners.⁵¹ The meaning of *safara/wasita* becomes clear only when the text is examined as a whole. The document speaks of three social groups. The elite is alluded to in terms with Isma'ili overtones such as *awliya'* (friends, adherents), and supporters (*ansar*) of the Fatimid cause (*da'wa*). Another group is referred to as *rijal al-dawla*, meaning the people of the ruling establishment. It includes governors, scribes of the administrative offices, and those who serve the ruler. The vizier must ensure that people of this group receive what they are entitled to (*huquq*) in return for their services (*khidma*). The third group is referred to by the term *ra'iya* (subjects), who live in the urban centers and the provinces. The vizier is charged with ensuring that the subjects are not oppressed by governors and administrators. In addition the vizier is empowered to deal with a wide range of fiscal matters including state incomes and expenditures (*kharaj* and *infaq*).⁵² Al-Jarjara'i's letter of appointment demonstrates that the viziers in the Fatimid state were always highly regarded: wide responsibilities were concentrated in their hands and lofty titles were bestowed on them. But in the tenth-eleventh centuries, in contrast to the twelfth century, a division between military, administrative and religious responsibilities was maintained in the Fatimid state.

More close in time and circumstance to Shirkuh's letter of appointment is Shawar's letter of nomination as the Fatimid vizier. It was written by Ibn Khallal, the head of the Chancery, on the

⁵¹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, 80.

⁵² *Ibid*, 81-2, the text says that the vizier is authorized to sign (*tawqi'*) on behalf of the ruler.

behalf of al-ʿAdid. The circumstances that led to Shawar's second nomination as the vizier were not much different from those that were behind the nomination of Shirkuh. In both cases the former vizier was killed as result of a foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the Fatimid state, and the new vizier was supported by a foreign expeditionary force. However, the content and style of these two letters of appointment are very different.

Shawar's letter of appointment begins by stating that it was issued by the servant of Allah and his friend, the Commander of the Believers, ʿAbd Allah Abi Muhammad al-ʿAdid li-Din Allah. The vizier is addressed as the Most Illustrious Lord, Sultan of the Armies, Protector of Islam (*nasir al-Islam*), the Sword of the Imam, the Pillar of Religion (*ʿumdat al-din*).⁵³ References to Fatimid viziers as those who Protect (*nasiri*) and Wield the Sword (*sayfi*), and the combination of the titles Sword of Islam and Protector of the Imam are known from documentary sources of the twelfth century. But the title Sultan of the Armies is a new one. On previous occasions, in the protocol of Ridwan the vizier of al-Hafiz, the title was Amir of the Armies, which signifies a rank and title much lower than Sultan of the Armies. The combination of the titles Sultan of the Armies and Sword of the Imam in Shawar's letter of appointment creates a powerful impression and conveys the primarily military character of Shawar's vizierate.⁵⁴

Nonetheless the document repeatedly refers to the Fatimid rulers as Friends of Allah and Rightly Guided Imams designated to rule, responsible for jurisdiction (*ahkam*) and protectors of the religion (*din*) of Allah.⁵⁵ The vizier is requested to bless the grandfather of the Imam, Muhammad, the Seal of Prophets, and ʿAli and his offspring, the Rightly Guided Imams. In that way the document re-states the Fatimid claim that they are the descendants of ʿAli, the cousin of the Prophet who was also married to Fatima, his daughter. The theme repeated throughout the whole text is: the Commander of the Believers was selected by Allah to rule and to protect Islam (*al-milla al-Hanafiyya*).⁵⁶ Although Shawar was a mili-

⁵³ Qalqashandi, X, 310.

⁵⁴ For Ridwan's protocol, see Khan, *Arabic Legal*, 308. The titles Amir of the Armies and Sword of Islam appear also in Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik's letter of nomination as vizier. See, Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 218; Dadoyan, 155, n.10.

⁵⁵ Qalqashandi, X, 311, para. 2, 3; 312, para. 1.

tary vizier on whom unprecedented titles were bestowed, the documents claim that he was carefully selected by the Commander of the Believers, who examined his most trusted men and found Shawar to be the most illustrious among them.⁵⁷ Shawar's responsibilities were administrative (*tadbir*) and political (*siyasa*), and he was requested to act justly ('*adl, insaf*) in harmony with established rules (*kanun*) and customs ('*ada*) in order to eradicate oppression (*mazalim*) and infringements of the law (*i'tida*). Shawar is described as wielding overall responsibility behind the throne.⁵⁸ But, in line with the argument that Shawar's nomination was the result of selection by the Fatimid ruler, it is repeatedly stated that the Commander of the Believers is the driving force behind the vizier and that he will guide and support him.⁵⁹

This internal contradiction permeates the text. On the one hand, the divine nature of Fatimid rule and the dynasty are asserted in the most powerful terms. On the other hand, it is admitted that the state is run by the vizier.⁶⁰ The vizier is depicted as surrendering his sword to the service of Islam (*tawhid, iman*) protecting Islam from polytheism (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kuf*). The vizier is also responsible for the army and the people (*ra'iya*), he protects the cadis of the Muslims and guides the Isma'ili propagandists.⁶¹ The vizier is expected to speak in favor of the members of the ruling elite (*umara', awliya'*) whose swords, the document declares, are the pillars of religion.⁶² This statement reinforces the impression that the vizier is in fact the only channel of communication between the ruler and his subordinates. It is the duty of the vizier to act in accordance with justice and to secure the proper functioning of the judicial system and prevent oppression. This repetition of the duties incumbent on the vizier is made in connection with the declaration that the vizier is responsible for the provinces and fiscal matters.⁶³

The differences between Shawar's and Shirkuh's letters of ap-

⁵⁶ The Fatimids are referred to by the term *dawla*, which means both dynasty and state. See, Qalqashandi, X, 312 para. 2; 313, para. 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 313, ll, 7-8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 313, l. 13; 3317, ll, 4-6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 314, ll, 10, 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 315, ll, 9-10; 316, ll, 3-4.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 315, ll, 12-3, 316, ll, 9-10.

⁶² *Ibid*, 317, ll, 9-10.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 317, ll, 3-7.

pointment are very substantial. In Shawar's letter the divine legitimization of the Fatimid rule occupies a central place in the text and is constantly referred to. The document tries to convey the impression that the vizier, with all his titles and responsibilities, is a subordinate of the Imam. In Shirkuh's letter the role of the Imam and his credentials are acknowledged, but most of the text is devoted to the vizier and his responsibilities.

Shawar's letter of appointment as the Fatimid vizier was followed by a letter addressed to his son, al-Kamil. The two opening paragraphs of this letter are of a laudatory nature in praise of God. Then the divine character of the Fatimid dynasty (*al-dawla al-ahwiyya*) and its superior qualities (*ahsan al-siyar*) are asserted.⁶⁴ The assertion that the vizier was chosen by the Imam is also re-stated in al-Kamil's letter.⁶⁵ On the whole the text is unyielding, the language rich and cryptic and the essence of the document becomes apparent only gradually. The text refers in an enigmatic way to the spread of *kuffar* (i.e. unbelievers—apparently meaning Crusaders) in the provinces (*diyar*) of Egypt. The impression conveyed is that against this background the Commander of the Believers decided to invest al-Kamil with responsibility for the administration of Cairo and the provinces.⁶⁶ What follows is an unexpected and quite unusual statement testifying to the importance of Cairo to the Fatimids. The statement begins by referring to Cairo by the standard appellation as the Protected, *al-mahrusa*. But then the town is also described as the pillar of Ismailism and Islam (*'umdat al-iman wa-'l-Islam*), and *dar al-hijra* of the Imam and the stronghold of the Fatimid state (*khilafa*) since ancient times.⁶⁷ Each one of the terms used in this short description is a charged one. The word *iman*, belief, refers to Ismailism (in the same way as the word *mu'minin* stands for the Isma'ilis). The term *dar al-hijra* (Abode of Emigration) also acquired an Isma'ili meaning. At different stages of Isma'ili history, leaders of the various branches of the movement established in the regions in which they propagated their beliefs places called *dar al-hijra* as bases for their activity and focal points for their supporters. The fact that Cairo is regarded as

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 318, ll, 12-8, 319, ll, 1-3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 319, ll, 15, 17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 323, ll, 1-3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 323, ll, 4-5.

the *dar al-hijra* of the Fatimid Imam explains the references to it as Protected. The town is protected by the presence of the divinely inspired and rightly guided Imam. The appellation "Protected" when referring to Cairo continued to be in use in the post-Fatimid period, but it lost its Isma'ili meaning. For example, the inscription commemorating the building of the Citadel of Cairo by Saladin from 579/1183-1184 speaks of Cairo as Protected by God. According to this inscription, the Citadel is to provide protection and comfort. The immense difference between the meaning that the Fatimids attributed to their capital and the Ayyubid point of view reflects the lack of divine pretensions by the Ayyubid rulers.⁶⁸

Notwithstanding this important testimony to the significance of Cairo to the Fatimids, the essential part of the document deals with al-Kamil, who is to act as the deputy of his father. The document states that al-Kamil's deputyship reflects the wish (*ray*) of both the Fatimid ruler, the Commander of the Believers, and Shawar, the Most Illustrious Lord. In this section of the text the document refers to the Fatimid ruler and his vizier as almost equals. The wording of Shawar's and al-Kamil's letters of appointment mirror the dependence of the Fatimid Imam on his vizier for the running of the state.⁶⁹ Al-Kamil's letter of appointment had its precedents. Ruzzik ibn Tala'i', the son of the vizier Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik, also received a letter of appointment during the vizierate of his father. It is a long, complex and quite obscure document. Qalqashandi who reproduces the entire text gives a succinct and accurate summary of its essence. He says that Ruzzik ibn Tala'i' was entrusted with the supervision of the *mazalim* jurisdiction and command of the army.⁷⁰ Indeed both matters are mentioned in the text.⁷¹ But these two points of substance are almost lost in the

⁶⁸ For the Isma'ili meaning of the term *dar al-hijra*, see F. Daftary, *The Isma'ilis. Their History and Doctrines*, (Cambridge, 1992), index. For the Ayyubid inscription on the citadel of Cairo, see N. O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, (Leiden, 1995), 68-9.

⁶⁹ Qalqashandi, X, 324, ll, 12-3, see also, ll, 2-3, 9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 325.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 334, ll, 6-7, 10. Command over the army is referred to by the phrase: *al-nazar fi 'l-isfahlariyya*. The Persian title *isfahlar* was widely used in the Arabic-speaking Middle East for the commander of the army. For instance, the contemporary 'Umara uses it. See, 69. It signified a rank, or title, higher than *amir* but lower than *sultan*. For a full discussion, see Elisséeff, "La titulature", 167-9.

long and occasionally enigmatic text.⁷² Large sections of the document are addressed to Ruzzik ibn Tala'i. It said that he is honored by God and serves as the guardian and protector of the Commander of the Believers.⁷³ Other unspecified military and administrative responsibilities are also alluded to and a sharing of responsibilities between the vizier, the father, and the son is mentioned as well.⁷⁴

The passage dealing with the essence of the *mazalim* jurisdiction is of interest. The importance of this institution is stressed in powerful terms. The text states that the man responsible for *mazalim* is entrusted with a divine treasure (*kanz min kunuz al-rahma*), and the institution is seen as a tool for safeguarding the public interest (*maslaha al-'amma*).⁷⁵ This passage reflects the fact that in the Fatimid state, like in medieval Islam in general, the sovereign had wide discretionary powers to maintain the public interest as he understood it. In line with a long Middle Eastern tradition to which medieval Islam was a heir, the Fatimid Imam dispensed justice and had overall responsibility for jurisdiction. Going back to Ibn 'Asakir's depiction of Nur al-Din, it is clear that the notion of the "just king" and the importance of the *mazalim* were neither original inventions of Nur al-Din nor of Ibn 'Asakir. These were commonly shared Islamic values whose origins go back to very ancient Middle Eastern traditions, which perceived the king as a lawgiver and judge.

It can be argued that the letters of appointment given to Shirkuh and later to Saladin represent the culmination of a process. In the eleventh century the Fatimid viziers were civilians and the Imams wielded supreme political power in the state. The vizierial letters of appointment reflected this distribution of power. In the twelfth century Fatimid military viziers became more powerful than the Imams, and this change is reflected in their letters of appointment. The titles of the viziers became more bombastic and the

⁷² The documents begins in a standard way by stating the credentials of the Fatimid ruler: servant of Allah, his friend, Imam and Commander of the Believers. The recipient of the letter is requested to voice the usual blessings on the Fatimid ruler, the Prophet Muhammad, his grandfather, the pure (Fatimid) family and rightly guided Imams. Later in the text, this demand is repeated. The divine nature of the Fatimid dynasty, which is supported by God himself, is asserted many times. See, Qaqashandi, X, 325, 326, II, 4-5, 9, 16-7, 327, II, 1-9, 10-1.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 330, II, 17, 19.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 333, II, 6-7, 9-10, 13-4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 334, I, 15.

wording of the letters stressed the pivotal role of the vizier in the state and behind the throne. Sons of viziers were given separate letters of appointment reflecting the desire of their fathers to establish a hereditary vizierate on the model of the Jamali family. However, in the three months that elapsed between the appointment of Shirkuh and Saladin the military balance of power between the Fatimids and Nur al-Din's expeditionary force in Egypt did not change. There was nothing new that might explain the authorization given to Saladin to set up a hereditary vizierate. Certainly the precedent did exist and some tried to emulate it. But the clue to understanding why Saladin accomplished what other viziers, under very similar circumstances, failed to achieve should be sought in the text of Saladin's letter of appointment itself. In a phrase, which comes immediately after the statement about the hereditary nature of Saladin's vizierate, it is said that the Chancery was ordered by al-'Adid to write this document.⁷⁶ If this was indeed the case, any justification by the Chancery would have been spurious. The Chancery was not a policy-making body: it executed the orders of the ruler. However, we have every reason to doubt the declaration that the new character of Saladin's vizierate was an initiative of al-'Adid. More probably, Qadi al-Fadil, the author of both letters of appointment, is justifying himself as merely following al-'Adid's orders. Qadi al-Fadil as well as Ibn Khallal, his superior in the Chancery, and other administrators cooperated with the Syrian emirs. The fact that the young and inexperienced al-'Adid, and the Fatimid ruling establishment as a whole, lost control over the Chancery is reflected by 'Imad al-Din's candid remark that Ibn Khallal had power over the correspondence and he wrote what he wished.⁷⁷ In plain terms, the Fatimid regime was betrayed by the administrators in its service.

II. The cooperation of Fatimid administrators with Shirkuh and Saladin tilted the balance in the favor of the Ayyubids. None of the Fatimids viziers of the 1050's and 1060's obtained the same

⁷⁶ Ibn Wasil, II, 459, II, 6-7.

⁷⁷ 'Imad al-Din, *Kharidat al-Qasr*, I, 235, repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 487. Ibn al-Sayrafi (1071-1147) says in a manual dealing with the Chancery that the person in charge must be of the same persuasion (*madhhab*) as the ruler (*malik*). But his statement reflects eleventh-century realities. See, his *Al-Qanun fi Diwan al-Rasa'il*, (ed) A. F. Sayyid (Cairo, 1990), 9.

degree of cooperation from the civilian elite. Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik was a Shi'ite, Dirgham ruled by terror and Shawar only brought calamities on the country. The Ayyubids offered hope to the civilian elite. They were Sunnis in the service of a powerful and respected Sunni ruler. Their own record, and the record of their master, was impressive. The cooperation of the civilian elite with the Ayyubids was not limited to a few key persons such as Qadi al-Fadil: it was quite widespread. The sources are not detailed enough to allow a full prosopographical study of those who changed sides at that crucial moment, but some revealing information is available. Some of those who made a smooth transition from their former employers to the service of Saladin were top-ranking administrators under the Fatimids. We can take as an example the case of *cadi* al-Athir ibn Bunan (507-596/1113-1199) from the Anbari family of Fatimid viziers. Under the Fatimids he had served as the head of the Office of the Inspection (*diwan al-nazar*). Following the demise of the Fatimid state, Ibn Bunan, on the recommendation of Qadi al-Fadil, was accepted into Saladin's service. He served as Inspector in Tinnis and Alexandria and was later in the service of Saladin's brother, Tughtakin.⁷⁸ A recommendation from Qadi al-Fadil was always important in opening the way for former Fatimid administrators to the service of Saladin. This was, for instance, the case with Qadi al-Fadil's own secretary, Abu 'l-Hasan, known as the Egyptian secretary, who had also served al-'Adid. Saladin later appointed him as a secretary of his son al-Malik al-Zahir.⁷⁹ Two of the better known administrative families which spanned the Fatimid-Ayyubid period are the Makhzumis and Mammatis. In Fatimid times, Abu 'l-Hasan al-Makhzumi, the author of an administrative manual on tax-collection, had served as the chief of the Office of Fustat. His son, Abu 'l-Qasim (547-615/1152-1218), entered into Saladin's service and became the official in charge of religious endowments in Egypt including Cairo. Muhadhdhab ibn Mammati was, in the late Fatimid period, employed in the Office of the Army. Following the arrival of Shirkuh and Saladin to Egypt, he and his sons converted to Islam. Following their conversion members of the family advanced rapidly in

⁷⁸ Mundhiri, II, 206-8; Ibn al-Qifti, III, 209-10; Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, VII, 154-5.

⁷⁹ Ibn al-'Adim, V, 2302.

Ayyubid service.⁸⁰ In another case, the son of a former Fatimid administrator successfully established himself in the service of Saladin and served in many posts including in the Office of the Army.⁸¹ For some people, entrance into Saladin's service marked a great change in their life. For instance, Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Afdali (543-622/1148-1225), of the Mukhtar family from Qus, was known in his early adult life for his literary talents. But under Saladin he embarked on a military career serving as an emir. His military service did interfere with his poetry; he became a renowned poet in his times.⁸² Another case involves a former Fatimid propagandist, Fakhr al-Dawla al-Aswani, the stepson of the *cadi* Rashid ibn al-Zubayr, Saladin's supporter from Alexandria. Qadi al-Fadil much respected Fakhr al-Dawla and opened his way to Saladin's service.⁸³ The most spectacular career was made by Masrur, a former Fatimid eunuch. He became the commander of Saladin's bodyguard (*halqa*) and received the rank (or title) of emir.⁸⁴ Saladin's most distinguished admiral was also a former Fatimid officer. Other people who staffed Saladin's administration were born in the Fatimid period but were not necessarily employed by the Fatimids. These already represent the Ayyubid age.⁸⁵

Qadi al-Fadil himself had much to gain by siding with Shirkuh and Saladin. But, it must be remembered that at the time he lent his support to them both their final triumph was barely conceivable. The cooperation of the civil elite of the Fatimid state with Shirkuh and Saladin was religiously motivated. The common bonds of Sunni Islam proved to be a strong motivating force behind the cooperation given by Fatimid administrators to Shirkuh and Saladin as early as the campaign of 1167. Ibn Abi Tayy's account is very

⁸⁰ For the Makhzumis, see Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, III, 665-6; Ibn al-'Adim, VI, 2647. For the Mammatis, see Safadi, IX, 19-27.

⁸¹ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, II, 116-7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, III, 64-5. For another emir-poet who served the Fatimids and Saladin, see Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi, *Al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Hula Hadra al-Qahira*, (ed) H. Nassar (Cairo, 1970), 228-9.

⁸³ Maqriz, *Muqaffa*, I, 269. Two brothers of the Zubayr family became famous in the late Fatimid period. One is al-Qadi al-Muhadhdhab, he was associated with the vizier Tala'i Ibn Ruzzik and died in Rabi' II 561/January-February 1166. The other was al-Qadi al-Rashid, who supported Saladin in Alexandria and later was executed by Shawar. See, Safadi, (ed) R. 'Abd al-Tawwab (Beirut, 1979), XII, 131-7; Kutubi, I, 337-41.

⁸⁴ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 216.

⁸⁵ For example, see al-Mundhiri, I, 106-7.

revealing on this point. Before the Battle of Babayn was fought, Shirkuh had appealed to Alexandria for help. The civilian elite of the town responded positively and the emir Ibn Masal sent his nephew, Ibn 'Awf, with a shipment of arms.⁸⁶ The head of the Fatimid administration in Alexandria, Ibn Zubayr, actively supported Saladin.⁸⁷ When Alexandria was besieged by Shawar and the Crusaders, Ibn Masal and his nephew, together with Ibn Zubayr and the *cadi* Ibn Habbab organized the defence of the town by recruiting nomadic tribes from the region. This group of four, rejected bribes offered by Shawar for the surrender of Saladin and his troops.⁸⁸ In the agreement arranging Saladin's evacuation of Alexandria, Saladin stipulated that no retribution would be taken against those who had helped him. However, Shawar broke his promises and Saladin could do little on their behalf. He had to ask Amalric to intervene with Shawar to honor the agreement. For Ibn Zubayr, Saladin's efforts came too late; as Shawar had already executed him.⁸⁹ The most explicit explanation for the behavior of the civilian elite of Alexandria is given by the late historian Ibn Wasil who says that the population of Alexandria welcomed the Syrian expeditionary force because of the prevailing Sunni spirit in the town.⁹⁰ This is not an unfounded characterization of the religious atmosphere in the town which had already been a bastion of Sunni Islam during the Fatimid period.

III. The letters of appointment written by Qadi al-Fadil provide an important insight into the internal disintegration of the Fatimid state. However, the selection of Saladin as Shirkuh's successor was an outcome of an internal power struggle within Nur al-Din's expeditionary force. We have seen that neither the historian-admirers of Saladin nor Ibn al-Athir provide a coherent picture of these events. Both types of accounts are highly tendentious. We

⁸⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 426 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy's *al-Sira al-Salahiyya—the Life of Saladin*. Ibn Abi Tayy relies here on oral information supplied by an eyewitness who was involved in these events).

⁸⁷ He is described as the head of the Office of Alexandria, i.e. the administrative office dealing with the affairs of the town. See, Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 427 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy).

⁸⁸ Richards, "The Early History of Saladin", 152 (who quotes and translates into English a passage from *Bustan al-Jami'*).

⁸⁹ Ibn Khallikan, I, 161.

⁹⁰ Ibn Wasil, I, 151.

shall now re-examine these events relying mostly on the accounts by Ibn Abi Tayy and Ibn Furat and utilizing some biographical data supplied by Ibn Khallikan. Following Shirkuh's death, al-'Adid asked the Syrian emirs who they recommended as vizier. The candidature of Shihab al-Din, Saladin's uncle, was put forward. But Shihab al-Din who was invited to the palace declined the nomination knowing that he did not enjoy the unanimous support of the other emirs. In a conversation with al-'Adid, Shihab suggested Saladin as the vizier and his choice was accepted by the Fatimid Imam, who appreciated Saladin's bravery and his role in the elimination of Shawar.⁹¹ However, al-'Adid's positive answer to Shihab's proposal was not enough to secure the post of vizier for Saladin. The sources which we follow do provide significant information for an understanding of the internal balance of power within Nur al-Din's expeditionary force. Shirkuh had at his disposal his own private corps, the Asadiyya, a force which at the time of his death was 500 men strong. According to the late Ibn Furat, these soldiers were military slaves of Shirkuh and they supported Saladin. Ehrenkreutz has already called attention to the significance of the support given by the Asadiyya to Saladin.⁹² This support must have been crucial to Saladin's rise to power, especially as two of Shirkuh's confidants actively backed him. One of them was the Kurd 'Isa al-Hakkari of Mosul, who was Shirkuh's private leader of prayer (*imam*). He began his career as a student of law in Aleppo (he is referred to in the sources as a jurist of the Shafi'i school) where he entered into Shirkuh's service. The other person who proved to be instrumental in the efforts to secure Saladin's nomination was Baha' al-Din Qaraqush, an eunuch manumitted by Shirkuh. Both of them became the close and trusted aids of Saladin. It is said that 'Isa felt free to say to Saladin things that other people did not dare to mention.⁹³

⁹¹ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 438-9 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy).

⁹² Ibn Furat, IV, pt.1, 56; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, 63. He, however, failed to notice that Qaraqush was Shirkuh's freedman and his description of him is misleading.

⁹³ Ibn Khallikan, III, 497, IV, 91-2. 'Isa al-Hakkari died on 9 Dhu 'l-Qa'da 585/20 November 1189. In a short obituary note Abu Shama mentions the most important facts about him; he was a close companion of both Shirkuh and Saladin, and he secured the support of people (i.e. emirs) for Saladin. See, (Beirut), II, 150; al-Mundhiri, I, 213-5. Another important supporter of Saladin among the officers of Nur al-Din's force in Egypt was Jardik, Nur al-Din's leading emir. He gets the credit for the killing of Shawar. See, Sibṭ ibn Jawzi, VIII, pt.2, 456.

These accounts put the nomination of Saladin in its proper historical context. By 1169, the militarization of politics in the Muslim Middle East had been long established and widespread. Military dictators rose to power with the backing of their military faction or tribal following. Both variants took place in twelfth-century Fatimid Egypt. Within the framework of the militarization of politics of the Muslim polity, collaboration between the civilian elite and the military class also had a long tradition. The cooperation of the Fatimid administrators with the leaders of Nur al-Din's army was a rather unusual case. The administrators sided with a foreign military faction against the dynasty they served. But in the light of the dismal performance of the Fatimid regime and—from the point of view of the civilian elite—its unappealing religious character their choice is quite understandable.

d. *The Battle of the Blacks*

According to Maqrizi, who echoes an elaborate version of Ibn Abi Tayy, Saladin, following his nomination as the Fatimid vizier, underwent a spiritual transformation: he abstained from wine and refrained from entertainment. He matured and became serious. It is interesting to note that Ibn Abi Tayy portrays Nur al-Din in a similar way. Prior to attaining power, Nur al-Din gave himself to vice. However, at an early stage of his rule, he underwent a spiritual experience and changed his ways.⁹⁴ Notwithstanding Ibn Abi Tayy's grudge against Nur al-Din, it seems that in both cases the drift of his account is positive and is meant to be an appreciative characterization of both rulers.

Whatever was Saladin's state of mind, his immediate policies were aimed at securing a smooth transfer of power into his hands. Saladin established friendly relations with al-ʿAdid and, at the same time, was trying to buy the good will of his comrades in the Syrian expeditionary force, especially following the return of some of the emirs to Syria. In order to secure the loyalty of the remaining soldiers and emirs, Saladin was in great need of money. For that purpose he used the riches amassed by his uncle Shirkuh.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Maqrizi, *Ittiʿaz*, III, 310; Richards, "A Consideration", 147-8 (who quotes and translates into English the account of Ibn Abi Tayy). For Nur al-Din, see Khayat, 180.

⁹⁵ Maqrizi, *Ittiʿaz*, III, 310.

Another powerful instrument which was available to Saladin was the distribution of *iqtaʿ*. The allocation of these grants of land came at the expense of the Fatimid ruling establishment (*ahl al-dawla*), and the people in the service of the Fatimid dynasty (*ahl Misr*). In order to gain control over the distribution of the *iqtaʿ*, al-ʿAdid's freedom of action had to be curtailed. The general purport of Saladin's policies was clear, and the Fatimid ruling establishment did not delude itself as to Saladin's ultimate goals.⁹⁶ In fact, Saladin's friendly relations with al-ʿAdid were a masquerade. Saladin exacted from him money and humiliated him publicly by entering the palace precinct while riding on horseback (violating in that way the exclusive privilege of the Imam).

The Battle of the Blacks must be examined in the context of Saladin's policies which aimed at the weakening of al-ʿAdid's position. The destruction and dispersal of the Blacks rendered the Fatimid dynasty defenseless; it was a necessary preparatory step towards the fall of the Fatimid state. As we have seen in Chapter One neither the accounts of Saladin's historian-admirers nor that of Ibn al-Athir can be trusted to provide a logical background for the Battle of the Blacks. Furthermore, with the exception of passing remarks made by Maqrizi, contemporary and later historians say nothing about Saladin's overall aims. However, Ibn Zafir is very explicit about Shirkuh's intentions following his nomination as Fatimid vizier: he strove to overthrow the Fatimid dynasty and sought an opportunity to do so.⁹⁷

The clearest information on Saladin's aims is unintentionally supplied by Ibn Khallikan's entry on Najm al-Din Khabushani, a Shafi'i jurist of Persian origin who lived as an ascetic in Fustat. In unspecified circumstances he established friendly relations with Saladin and later it was on his advice that Saladin founded a law college allocated to the Shafi'i jurists and adjacent to Shafi'i's tomb in the area of the cemeteries, Qarafa, near the capital. Najm al-Din is depicted as a wholehearted advocate of a legal decision issued by the jurists of potential use to Saladin which permitted the execution of al-ʿAdid as an offender against religion.⁹⁸ This account must be examined in conjunction with the information supplied

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, III, 311.

⁹⁷ See, 116.

⁹⁸ Ibn Khallikan, III, 111. On Khabushani's relations with Saladin, see Leiser, "The Madrasa", 42-3.

by the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, concerning the fate of al-ʿAdid. In this work several versions are recounted. The first one is on the authority of Safi 'l-Dawla, who was an eunuch in the service of the wife of the Fatimid ruler al-Zafir (1149-1154). He says that al-ʿAdid committed suicide after being informed that Turanshah, Saladin's brother, had come to the palace and was looking for him.⁹⁹ The second version says that Turanshah killed al-ʿAdid, who did not reveal to him the location of the treasure hidden in the palace. According to the third version, Saladin and Turanshah had drunk wine with al-ʿAdid and then asked the jurists if it were permissible for the Caliph to consume alcohol. The jurists declared that if it proved to be so he should be deposed. But Saladin took a more drastic step, he sent his brother to kill al-ʿAdid. The account in the *History of the Patriarchs* ends with a quotation from the official announcement published by Qadi al-Fadil following the death of al-ʿAdid. This document states that al-ʿAdid died a natural death and was buried in a dignified way.¹⁰⁰ Needless to say that Qadi al-Fadil's statement came to be the only version quoted by historians of the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.

We find indirect support for Ibn Khallikan's account in another independent report: Ibn Jubayr's description of his visit to Egypt in 1183. Al-Khabushani was known and famous in Muslim Spain, and Ibn Jubayr wished to visit him. He went to see the tomb of Shafi'i and the law college built there by Saladin, who also met the costs of maintaining this complex. But at that time al-Khabushani resided in his own mosque in Cairo, and it was there that

⁹⁹ This work although attributed to Sawirus Ibn al-Muqaffa' is in fact a collective work written over a long period of time. The author of the sections dealing with the years 1166-1216 is anonymous. For textual history of the *History of the Patriarchs*, see F. Micheau, "Croisades et croisés vus par les historiens arabes chrétiens d'Égypte", in *Itinéraires d'Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen*, (eds) R. Curiel and R. Gyselen (Bures-Sur-Yvette, 1994), 169-70; J. Den Heijer, "Coptic Historiography in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Early Mamluks Periods", *Medieval Encounters* 2(1996), 69-77. In the notes and the bibliography, this work is quoted as Ibn Muqaffa'. See, III, pt.2, edited and translated into English by A. Khater and O. H. E. Khs-Burmester (Cairo, 1970), 66 (Arabic), 111 (English). The English translation of this account is erroneous due to a misunderstanding of two crucial terms: *ustadh* meaning an eunuch and *jiha*, which is a honorific for a wife of a ruler. Furthermore, in the Arabic text, after al-Zafir, the letter *ba* ' should be emended to *iyya*.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, pt.2, 66-7, 68 (Arabic), 111-2, 114 (English).

Ibn Jubayr eventually met him and received his blessing.¹⁰¹ Ibn Jubayr does not explain what brought al-Khabushani to such an exalted position but, as we have seen, the missing link is supplied by Ibn Khallikan. Taking into account the data provided by Ibn Khallikan, Ibn Jubayr and Maqrizi, we can conclude that Saladin had a clear objective: to put an end to the Fatimid state. And to that end he was preparing the necessary legal and religious justification. The war that Saladin waged on the Blacks was an aggressive act. However, Saladin himself and his historian-admirers deny any worldly motives on his part. Therefore the Battle of the Blacks had to be justified and presented as an defensive act. The complex story of the plot, told in Chapter One, served that purpose and the story itself is, in my view, a literary invention.

e. *The Demise of the Fatimid State*

Saladin took full advantage of his victory against the Blacks; his extortion of al-ʿAdid continued, and he began to billet his troops in Cairo taking possession of properties which had become vacant following the destruction and dispersal of the Blacks and the Armenian troops which, like the Blacks, had been expelled from Cairo.¹⁰² Al-ʿAdid had in fact been put under house arrest. Qaraqush, who helped to secure the support of Nur al-Din's expeditionary force in Egypt for Saladin's nomination as vizier, was appointed supervisor of the Fatimid palaces.¹⁰³ During 566/1170-1171, Saladin's position in Egypt was greatly strengthened. His family—father and brothers—arrived from Syria and he beat off a Christian attack on Damietta. For that purpose al-ʿAdid had sent Saladin a million *dinars* which further weakened his position.¹⁰⁴ Maqrizi says that the successful defence of Damietta and the arrival of Saladin's family in Egypt greatly strengthened Saladin's determination to put an end to Fatimid rule in Egypt.¹⁰⁵ In the same year, Saladin carried out a further assault on the remnants of the Fatimid army and its officers which lived in Fustat. In a well-

¹⁰¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, (ed) W. Wright (Leiden, 1907), 48-9; English translation by R. J. C. Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, (London, 1952), 40-1.

¹⁰² Maqrizi, *Ittiʿaz*, III, 314.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 322.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 316.

¹⁰⁵ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 64.

prepared and coordinated action Fatimid military personnel in Fustat were attacked and driven out of the town, and the property of the dispossessed Fatimid emirs was seized by Saladin.¹⁰⁶ The cumulative effect of Saladin's actions was the removal from the capital, Fustat-Cairo, of troops loyal to al-'Adid. The overthrow of the Fatimid dynasty became only a question of time.

Nur al-Din, who was himself under Abbasid pressure, demanded from Saladin the swift termination of Fatimid rule and the restoration of Sunni Islam. Saladin's tactic was cautious. The pace of his anti-Isma'ili policies depended on the progress made in weakening the power of the Fatimid army and court. Maqrizi's account is helpful in following the two-pronged policy of Saladin. In the period immediately following Saladin's nomination as vizier, the Friday sermons in Egypt continued to be delivered in the name of al-'Adid. The second person to be mentioned was Nur al-Din and Saladin was referred to only as Nur al-Din's deputy in Egypt.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, in accordance with a long-established Fatimid tradition, Saladin appeared together with al-'Adid for public prayers at the main mosques during the major religious festivals such as Ramadan and the Feast of the Breaking of Ramadan.¹⁰⁸ Only after the Battle of the Blacks, the victory at Damietta and the arrival of Saladin's family, were significant anti-Isma'ili measures taken. On Friday, 11 Dhu 'l-Hijja 565/25 August 1170, the Shi'ite formula for the call to prayer was dropped and the names of the three Rightly Guided Caliphs, whom the Shi'ites abhor, were inserted into the sermon.¹⁰⁹ During 566/1170-1171, anti-Isma'ili policy was accelerated and intensified. Colleges for teaching Sunni law were established in Fustat, and Isma'ili judges were dismissed from their posts. Sessions of Isma'ili teaching which were traditionally held at the Azhar mosque in Cairo were also cancelled.¹¹⁰ The policy of removing Isma'ili and non-Isma'ili judges appointed by the Fatimids was carried out by Saladin's *cadi*, the Kurd Ibn Dirbas. As exemplified by the case of Ibn Barkat Abu 'l-Hasan, the purge was carried out with leniency. The people removed from their post were not necessarily persecuted. Abu 'l-Hasan was born in Bahnasa,

¹⁰⁶ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 321.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 311.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 310.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 317-8.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 319, 320.

a provincial town in Upper Egypt, and acquired his education in grammar and law in Fustat. In Fatimid times he was appointed as cadi of his hometown and then dismissed by Ibn Dirbas. He returned to Fustat and made a career as a teacher of the Koran and literature to the children of prominent people in the city. The cadis dismissed by Ibn Dirbas were replaced by Kurds and people from Syria.¹¹¹ Maqrizi says that the nomination of Ibn Dirbas was a result of the cooperation between Saladin and Qadi al-Fadil aiming at the overthrow of the Fatimid dynasty.¹¹² However, the ultimate implementation of this policy took place only after Cairo had been cleared of the remnants of the Fatimid army.

Saladin's explanation for the slow pace of his actions was his fear of the response that his policies might provoke.¹¹³ Actually he faced a dilemma quite similar to which the Fatimids had faced at the beginning of their rule in Egypt. The Fatimids, like Saladin, were determined to impose their own brand of Islam on Egypt, but were unable to gauge the likely local reaction. In both cases the new rulers adopted cautious policies. With the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious that their policies were over-cautious.

f. *The Conspiracy of 1174*

The full consolidation of Saladin's rule in Egypt took place after the overthrow of the Fatimid dynasty and coincidentally his relations with Nur al-Din became strained. One of the most intriguing events in the early period of Saladin's rule in Egypt was the conspiracy of 1174, which neither personally endangered Saladin nor threatened his rule. But the story of the conspiracy, or perhaps the alleged conspiracy, throws interesting light on Qadi al-Fadil and his relations with Saladin. On 2 Ramadan 569/5 April 1174, Saladin put to death a group of people who were accused of plotting against him. An account contemporary with these events is Qadi al-Fadil's report sent to Damascus. It was used by Ibn Abi Tayy who is quoted by Abu Shama. According to Qadi al-Fadil, former Fatimid courtiers (*ahl al-qasr*) and military personnel (*jund Misr*) had corresponded with the Crusaders, and had even ap-

¹¹¹ Ibn al-Qifti, III, 333-4.

¹¹² See, *Khitat*, III, 378-9.

¹¹³ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 316.

proached the Assassins. An envoy from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, who was on an official visit to Cairo, secretly met with the conspirators as well as with Jewish and Christian scribes. The conspirators claimed to enjoy the support of Isma'ili groups and former Fatimid black and Armenian troops. Their plan was to stage a rebellion in Cairo which was to coincide with an invasion of Egypt by the Crusaders. In the talks with the envoy from Jerusalem the conspirators insisted that the time was ripe for action; Cairo had been emptied of troops who had returned to their fiefs (*iqta's*) for the harvest. However, Saladin's agent infiltrated the conspirator circle and kept Saladin informed about the plot. The conspirators intended to restore the Fatimid state, but they were divided among themselves on two crucial issues: which member of the Fatimid royal family, kept in prison by Saladin, was to be selected as the new Imam, and on whom would the post of the vizier be conferred. Qadi al-Fadil says that the execution of the conspirators was a just and legal act ordained by God. Other punitive actions included the dispersal of Isma'ili supporters and the banishment of former Fatimid black soldiers and courtiers to remote parts of Upper Egypt.¹¹⁴

'Imad al-Din's version of these events that has come down to us differs in important details from that of Qadi al-Fadil. First of all, there is nothing in it about contacts between the conspirators, described as Fatimid propagandists or supporters (*du'at al-dawla al-Misriyya*), and the Crusaders. Secondly, supporters of Saladin (*ansar al-dawla al-Nasiriyya*) took part in the conspiracy or at least had knowledge of the plot. Thirdly, the plot was betrayed by a preacher who asked as a reward for his services the property of Ibn Kamil, a former *cadi* and Fatimid propagandist, who later was executed. 'Imad al-Din says that the conspirators were executed in accordance with the accepted political norms (*siyasa*), but no reference is made to divine law.¹¹⁵ However, Ibn Khallikan, who

¹¹⁴ Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 562-5 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil through Ibn Abi Tayy). Not surprisingly Ibn Abi Tayy's independent version of these events resembles that of Qadi al-Fadil. Like Qadi al-Fadil, Ibn Abi Tayy says that the conspirators approached the Crusaders, and men of religion (*'ulama'*) issued a legal opinion authorizing the execution of the conspirators. This statement is taken from Qadi al-Fadil's report. See, Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 561, 565.

¹¹⁵ Al-Bundari, 147-9, repeated by Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 560. In contrast to 'Imad al-Din, Ibn Abi Tayy say that it was Ibn Masal who informed on the conspirators to Saladin. See, Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 561.

quotes 'Imad al-Din's anthology of poets and poetry, says that the conspirators wrote to the Crusaders and hoped with their help to restore the Fatimid dynasty to power.¹¹⁶ Thus it is impossible to obtain an idea of the exact content of 'Imad al-Din's version of the conspiracy of 1174. The main problem is to understand the discrepancies between al-Bundari's abridgment of 'Imad al-Din's *the Syrian Lighting* and Qadi al-Fadil's report of these events, which 'Imad al-Din must have known. Al-Bundari's account indicates that 'Imad al-Din simply did not believe Qadi al-Fadil's version. But the accounts in the anthology of poets and poetry repeat a central motif in Qadi al-Fadil's version of the conspiracy: contacts with the Crusaders and the attempt to restore the Fatimid dynasty. Obviously 'Imad al-Din's various writings include a number of different accounts of these events.

When Qadi al-Fadil's version is examined on its own merits it appears to be highly problematic if not altogether dubious. There is a strange disparity between the alleged scope and threat of the plot and Saladin's action in the wake of its discovery. If indeed former Fatimid troops (*jund Misr*) were drafted into the conspiracy the punishment meted out was very lenient and on the whole absurd. Why should be potentially rebellious elements sent to Upper Egypt, a region that had been pacified only some years earlier? Moreover only one officer was among the executed conspirators. The other point is the absence of any indication of harsher treatment meted out to the surviving members of the Fatimid royal family. None of them was put to death.¹¹⁷ But the most intriguing question is the execution of the poet 'Umara.

¹¹⁶ See, III, 435 (quoting 'Imad al-Din's *Kharidat al-Qasr*). The printed edition of this work contains a reference saying that the conspirators of 1174 were trying to restore Fatimid rule. See, *Kharidat al-Qasr*, (Egyptian Poets), 187.

¹¹⁷ For the fate of the Fatimid royal family, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 394, 395-6; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 494-5 (who tells of his meeting with one of the surviving sons of al-'Adid, emir Abu 'l-Futuh, in 628/1230-1231), see 495 (quoting 'Imad al-Din); 506 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy). An infant son of al-'Adid, named Dawud, was smuggled from jail by his mother and delivered to a certain Fatimid *da'i* who brought him up. The secret was revealed only during the reign of the Sultan al-Kamil, who imprisoned Dawud in the citadel of Cairo where he died in 1248. See, Safadi, (ed) B. Badtke, (Beirut, 1979), XV, 377. But it appears that Safadi's information is of folkloristic character, or simply incorrect in date. Maqrizi says that Dawud died in 604/1207-1208, and al-Kamil allowed the conducting of a proper burial and mourning rites. However, he imprisoned the Fatimid sympathizers who showed up for the funeral and extorted money from them. See, *Suluk*, 202, 203, see also 111, 138, 139 and 209.

The sources are ambiguous and contradictory about 'Umara's religious and political leanings. Ibn Khallikan describes him as a Shafi'i jurist and a zealous Sunni, who acquired his education at a law college in Zabid.¹¹⁸ Ibn Wasil confirms that 'Umara was a Shafi'i jurist by his education, but describes him as a Fatimid zealot.¹¹⁹ 'Imad al-Din is astonished by 'Umara's adherence to the Fatimid cause and his yearning for the return of the Fatimids which brought his ruin.¹²⁰ Some *en passant* remarks in the sources referring to 'Umara only intensify the ambiguity surrounding him. For example, it is said that no less than al-Silafi, a leading Sunni jurist of the Maliki school in Egypt, extolled 'Umara, the jurist, in a poem. 'Umara is also referred to as a man of letters (*adib*), who specialised in the transmission of Prophetic traditions. And prior to his elegy for the Fatimids, 'Umara composed two elegies upon the death of Saladin's father.¹²¹

Abu Shama was aware of the need to put forward some explanation for the execution of 'Umara. He says, in an independent statement of his own, that 'Umara was blamed for encouraging Turanshah to launch his expedition to Yemen, which weakened the strength of Saladin's army and deprived him of the much-needed assistance of his brother. Clearly this is the personal view of Abu Shama and is contradicted by events and some of the sources that he himself quotes. Turanshah left for Yemen at the beginning of Rajab 569/February 1174. In light of Abu Shama's account, one would expect 'Umara to have joined him. But 'Umara remained in Egypt and some weeks later was put to death. In contrast to what Abu Shama says, the conclusion should be that 'Umara was perhaps executed because his patron was away. Ibn Abi Tayy speaks of close relations between 'Umara and Turanshah, but he says that the expedition to Yemen was approved by Saladin.¹²² A possible

¹¹⁸ See, III, 432.

¹¹⁹ See, I, 212. Both Ibn Khallikan and Ibn Wasil use the same expression when referring to 'Umara: *shadid al-ta'assub*, but the first means the Sunna while the second means the Fatimids.

¹²⁰ Quoted by Ibn Khallikan, III, 435-6.

¹²¹ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 710, II, 117, 381. S. M. Stern has summarized 'Umara's enigma in the following words: "...he seems to have managed to reconcile his Shafi'i Sunnism with an ardent attachment to the Fatimids". Stern also says that 'Umara paid in his life for his "continued advocacy of the Fatimid cause". See, his "The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Amir", *Oriens*, 4(1951), 212, 213.

¹²² Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 562 (whose independent account begins with *qultu*).

clue is supplied by Ibn al-Athir, who says that the relations between Qadi al-Fadil and 'Umara were strained due to animosity which had originated in the Fatimid period. Nonetheless, according to him, Qadi al-Fadil interceded with Saladin on the behalf of 'Umara, who was unduly suspicious of his advocacy. Regardless of Ibn al-Athir's tendentious remark, it is clear that 'Umara sought and hoped for Qadi al-Fadil's intervention on his behalf and when Qadi al-Fadil refused 'Umara understood that his fate was sealed.¹²³ It appears that Ibn al-Athir, who like Qadi al-Fadil belonged to the same cultural and occupational group, is at pains to exonerate Qadi al-Fadil from any direct responsibility for 'Umara's death at the hands of Saladin. The same applies to 'Imad al-Din who says that the jurists authorized the execution of 'Umara.¹²⁴ This statement cannot be harmonized with his other assertion namely that the conspirators were put to death according to the norms of the *siyasa*. Does it mean that the approval of the jurists was only needed for the execution of 'Umara? Qadi al-Fadil's behavior can be contrasted to what is told of a former Fatimid *cadi* and propagandist, Qadi al-Jalis, who was executed together with 'Umara. Qadi al-Jalis interceded with Shawar on behalf of a poet imprisoned by him, who had extolled Shirkuh and urged him to kill Shawar. Qadi al-Jalis' intervention came in spite of his strained relations with the poet and, following his successful intercession, he refused conciliatory gestures made by the grateful poet.¹²⁵ It seems that members of the civilian elite were expected to show some solidarity when oppressed by their rulers.

'Umara's elegy on the fall of the Fatimids contains a possible clue to his downfall. 'Umara laments the passing of the Fatimid dynasty and rule and reminds his listeners not only of the glory of the Fatimids but also of their justice and generosity. His elegy is couched in Fatimid (Isma'ili) terminology and explicitly refers to central Fatimid religious beliefs. He speaks of Fatimid Imams as "created out of light" and describes them as "the door of salvation in this world and the next". Furthermore, he speaks in strong terms against those who hated the Fatimids and betrayed al-'Adid.¹²⁶

¹²³ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 264. Abu Shama's account in *'Uyun*, I, 340-1, is apparently based on Ibn al-Athir.

¹²⁴ Quoted by Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 562.

¹²⁵ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, III, 347-8.

¹²⁶ I quote Paula Sanders's English translation of 'Umara's elegy included

Also 'Umara's book of the Egyptian viziers, which is in fact his autobiography, offers insight into his inner world. The first thing that strikes the reader is the total irrelevancy of 'Umara's work to the new epoch heralded by Saladin's overthrow of the Fatimids. Writing sometime between the fall of the Fatimids and his execution, 'Umara revives in his book the bygone world of the Fatimid viziers. He explains the reason for writing the book by a vague reference to the pedagogical aim of distinguishing the enduring from the transient and the good from the bad. But this moralistic aim is lost in a work which is, above all, about 'Umara himself. One can understand 'Umara; he thrived in the milieu he describes. But the most surprising thing is that 'Umara has nothing positive to say about the new masters of the country. They are simply referred to as Ghuzz. The only person associated with the new regime who is praised by 'Umara is Qadi al-Fadil.¹²⁷ Thus 'Umara's panegyric to Saladin and his association with Turanshah must be seen in the context of 'Umara's attempt to earn a living. His old patrons and benefactors were all dead and he suffered heavy losses in the fire that consumed Fustat. He was apparently impoverished which might explain his almost obsessive indulgence in mentioning the sums of money he used to earn from Fatimid viziers for his panegyrics. Clearly 'Umara had failed to adopt himself to the new circumstances and his ability to sense danger had also become impaired.

The allusion to the betrayal of al-'Adid in 'Umara's elegy on the fall of the Fatimids must have been very unpleasant to Qadi al-Fadil and might explain his animosity to 'Umara. We have every reason to question the reliability of Qadi al-Fadil's version of the conspiracy of 1174 as a whole. The list of those who paid with their lives for the alleged conspiracy offers a possible insight for understanding these events. The executed people were harmless persons who were in no position to endanger Saladin's rule. Among them were a *cadi*, a Fatimid propagandist, a former Fatimid emir,

in her *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo*, (N. Y., 1994), 136-7. For other short fragments of 'Umara's poetry extolling the Fatimid Imams and their sublime position as the guides of the mankind, see H. C. Kay's introduction to his *Yaman. Its Early History*, (the original texts, with translation and notes), (London, 1892), IX-X.

¹²⁷ 'Umara, 53-4, 80-1, 88, 93.

two administrators and an Armenian astrologer.¹²⁸ It seems that they were, as Ibn al-Athir hints, victims of old rivalries between members of the civilian elite. The people who were in power under Saladin put to death their old enemies. This impression is strengthened when the biographies of the people involved in these events are examined. Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani (d. 1449), in his biographic dictionary of the Egyptian cadis, says that Ibn Kamil was a Shiʿite (Imami) jurist. He was appointed to the posts of cadi and *daʿi*, (i.e. Fatimid propagandist) by the vizier Talaʿi ibn Ruzzik and held these posts intermittently for several years. He and others, including ʿUmara, were accused of attempting to restore Fatimid rule and of collaborating with the Franks. Ibn Hajar says that this slanderous report was brought to Saladin by a certain jurist. On the one hand, Ibn Hajar's account reflects Qadi al-Fadil's version of the plot saying that there was an attempt to involve the Franks. But, on the other hand, he speaks of personal animosities as also playing a part in these events. For example, the Ismaiʿli cadi, Ibn Jalis, was among those executed by Saladin, who had interrogated him about hidden Fatimid treasure. He revealed some information but not to Saladin's full satisfaction.¹²⁹ Otherwise Saladin is passive along the whole affair which supposedly endangered his rule. If our understanding of these events is correct, Saladin's passiveness confirms that he was manipulated by members of the civilian elite who had lent him their support, ran his state and used him to settle their own private vendettas. Among the members of the civilian elite, Saladin owed a special debt to Qadi al-Fadil. Apparently Saladin was quite aware of this. He is quoted as saying: "I took Egypt not by force of arms but by the pen of Qadi al-Fadil". In another version he is quoted as saying that he took the countries not through the swords (of his emirs), but by the pen of Qadi al-Fadil.¹³⁰ The first quotation can be understood as reflecting the fact that Saladin's letter of appointment as the Fatimid vizier was written by Qadi al-Fadil. Both versions manifest Saladin's

¹²⁸ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 561 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy).

¹²⁹ Ibn Hajar, I, 189-90, II, 303-4, 306-8. For people who left Egypt following Saladin's rise to power, see Ibn al-ʿAdim, VI, 2802.

¹³⁰ For the first version of this saying, see Dajani-Shakeel, "Egypt and the Egyptians", 25; Ayyad, 422. For the second version, see Sibṭ ibn Jawzi, VIII, pt.2, 472; Ibn Taghribirdi, XI, 157; Safadi, XVIII, 350.

profound understanding that the pen might occasionally be no less mighty than the sword.

The fact that the execution of 'Umara cast a shadow on the people involved in the events and especially on Qadi al-Fadil is clearly reflected by the complex and in itself quite improbable account of Maqrizi. He begins his tale of 'Umara's downfall by saying that Qadi al-Fadil used to meet a certain secretary, 'Abd al-Samad, who served him with great humility. However, one day, 'Abd al-Samad avoided Qadi al-Fadil's company arousing his suspicion that this reflected a change of attitude toward him on the part of Saladin. Qadi al-Fadil sent Zayn al-Din ibn Naja to investigate the matter. Qadi al-Fadil's messenger assured him that it had nothing to do with Saladin, but that 'Umara and others were involved in a plot against the Sultan. Maqrizi adds that Ibn Naja was aware of the fact that there was an old animosity between 'Umara and Qadi al-Fadil which went back to Fatimid days.

Qadi al-Fadil hastened to Saladin, who was attending Friday prayers at a mosque. According to Maqrizi, Qadi al-Fadil at once revealed to Saladin the full extent of the plot: the names of the conspirators (including 'Umara and 'Abd al-Samad), the involvement of former Fatimid troops and courtiers, the fact that some of Saladin's own soldiers were among the conspirators and above all the involvement of both the Normans of Sicily and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem in the conspiracy. Saladin wanted to be sure of the details which were corroborated by Ibn Naja, who asked for his services to be rewarded with the riches and property of *cadi* Ibn Kamil. At the time these events occurred, a delegation from Jerusalem arrived in Cairo with gifts and letters to Saladin. Maqrizi's account of these events has it all; Qadi al-Fadil's version of the plot but also surprisingly explicit remarks about Qadi al-Fadil's own involvement in the affair. On one hand, Qadi al-Fadil is portrayed as a credulous manipulable person and, on the other hand, as a vigilant protector of the safety of Saladin and his regime. It seems that Maqrizi himself was not very convinced by this version and he devotes an long additional explanation to the reasons behind 'Umara's execution. He says that 'Umara's continued adherence to the Fatimid cause and his public declarations mentioning the merits and the virtues of the Fatimid Imams put Saladin in an awkward position. Maqrizi especially mentions 'Umara's elegy on the fall of the Fatimids saying that

the jurists had declared 'Umara a heretic. Thus no one was really to be blamed for 'Umara's death. His undoing was his own fault. Finally, one of the more interesting details to be found in Maqrizi's biography of 'Umara is his casual remark that Saladin was responsible for the killing of Shawar.¹³¹

2. *Expansionism and the Search for Legitimacy*

a. *The Rupture with Nur al-Din*

Relations between Nur al-Din and Saladin were a sensitive subject, especially for 'Imad al-Din who had flourished in the service of both. 'Imad al-Din asserts that Saladin did not disobey Nur al-Din.¹³² Abu Shama echoes 'Imad al-Din's statement and disputes Ibn Abi Tayy's account to the contrary.¹³³ Ibn Abi Tayy is quite clear about relations between Nur al-Din and Saladin. He says, on the authority of his father, that Nur al-Din's hostility to Saladin was common knowledge, and Saladin's nomination as Fatimid vizier infuriated Nur al-Din. Also Saladin's mistrust of Nur al-Din's intentions toward him was widely known.¹³⁴

Ibn al-Athir pinpoints the exact circumstances that had led to the strained relations between the two rulers. This subject is treated in several of his accounts. In his universal history, Ibn al-Athir says that in Safar 567/October 1171 Saladin had attacked the fortress of Shawbak. When Nur al-Din was informed of this he attacked the Franks from another direction. However, Saladin's aides advised him to avoid meeting Nur al-Din. Saladin informed him that Shi'ite (apparently meaning Isma'ili) agitation in Egypt compelled him to leave the siege and to return to Cairo. In the history of the Atabegs the account is more hostile to Saladin. Ibn al-Athir

¹³¹ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, VIII, 751-6.

¹³² Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 503.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 442.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 440-1, 525, 558-9. In fact Nur al-Din's apprehension of Ayyubid success in Egypt was evident already during the short vizierate of Shirkuh. Ibn Abi Tayy, on the authority of his father, says that following Shirkuh's nomination as Fatimid vizier Nur al-Din nullified the *iqta's* held by Shirkuh and Saladin in Syria. If Nur al-Din did indeed do this it reveals his frustration in the face of developments which were beyond his control. See, Ibn Furat, IV, pt.1, 66 and 47, who too quotes Ibn Abi Tayy.

says that Nur al-Din had ordered Saladin to join him in a coordinated attack on the fortress of Karak. Saladin left Cairo on 20 Muharram 567/17 September 1171, but failed to arrive at the meeting point. He wrote to Nur al-Din excusing himself that internal problems in Egypt had obliged him to return, but Nur al-Din refused to accept this explanation. Ibn al-Athir proceeds by describing a meeting of the Ayyubid family in which the question was discussed what should be done if Nur al-Din invaded Egypt. Taqi al-Din was militant advocating opposing Nur al-Din if necessary. However, Saladin's father, Najm al-Din (described in the history of the Atabegs as a wise and cunning person) silenced him by saying that the Ayyubids were the servants and slaves of Nur al-Din, Egypt was his country, and they would obey whatever he commanded them to do. Later, in a private conversation, he told Saladin that his speech was for public consumption only, aiming at appeasing Nur al-Din. He continued by saying that the Ayyubids should avoid provoking Nur al-Din into action and must show no disobedience to him publicly.¹³⁵

According to Ibn al-Athir's version of these events, Saladin's mistrust of Nur al-Din's intentions had far-reaching consequences for Saladin's policies. The conquests of Nubia (568/1172-1173) and Yemen (569/1174-1175) were motivated by the desire of the Ayyubids to secure a place of refuge in case of military intervention in Egypt by Nur al-Din.¹³⁶ In contrast to Ibn al-Athir, 'Imad al-Din treats the conquest of Nubia and Yemen as events unrelated to Saladin's relations with Nur al-Din. The conquest of Yemen is depicted by 'Imad al-Din as a campaign against a local ruler who was a heretic and bloody tyrant, and the aim of the Ayyubid campaign was to restore Abbasid sovereignty.¹³⁷ 'Imad al-Din confirms that the attack on Karak and Shawbak in 1171 was supposed to be a coordinated action by Nur al-Din and Saladin. However, Saladin faced difficulties which prevented him from carrying out his part of the campaign.¹³⁸ When in 568/1172-1173, Saladin launched an attack against Shawbak and Karak. Qadi al-Fadil was quick to praise the exploits of this campaign. In a letter

¹³⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 244-5; *al-Bahir*, 158-9. Maqrizi follows *al-Bahir*. See, *Suluk*, 70-1.

¹³⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 254, 260.

¹³⁷ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 551, 552 (quoting 'Imad al-Din's *Kharidat al-Qasr*).

¹³⁸ Al-Bundari, 117-8; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 518.

to Nur al-Din, he claimed a great success: the area around the two fortresses was laid waste and the Bedouin were dispersed. He asserts that the expulsion of the Bedouin deprived the Crusaders of their guides. Furthermore, Saladin asks Nur al-Din to provide these Bedouin with a new territory (*iqta'*) in Syria.¹³⁹

We have two diametrically opposed versions of the relations between Saladin and Nur al-Din. Ibn al-Athir describes Saladin as aware of his misconduct toward his overlord and afraid of his wrath. 'Imad al-Din simply denies any tension in the relations between the two. The strength of Ibn al-Athir's account is that some of Saladin's deeds are explained as by-products of his strained relations with Nur al-Din. This explanation sounds more convincing than 'Imad al-Din's claim that the driving forces behind Saladin's expedition to Yemen were moral considerations and the wish to advance the Abbasid cause. Qadi al-Fadil's obvious exaggerations of the achievements of Saladin's independent raid against Shawbak and Karak indicate that Saladin was at pains to vindicate himself for his behavior in 1171. It is not too difficult to grasp what really was at stake in the relations between Nur al-Din and Saladin. Their views regarding the fortresses of Shawbak and Karak were very different. These two fortresses constituted a formidable obstacle to communications between Syria and Egypt.¹⁴⁰ For Nur al-Din, regardless of his true intentions towards Saladin, unobstructed passage between Syria and Egypt, his new possession, was a matter of importance. For Saladin, a Frankish obstacle on the route from Syria to Egypt was something he could comfortably live with. But the question of Karak and Shawbak was only a symptom of the fundamental problem that Nur al-Din faced: how to ensure that he would reap the full benefits of Saladin's success in Egypt? His ability to influence, let alone control, Saladin was very limited. Saladin, on his part, had no reason to increase his difficulties in Egypt by provoking Nur al-Din who for his part had no reason to push Saladin into open rebellion. Nur al-Din's attempts to influence events in Egypt were unsuccessful. It is true that Nur al-Din allowed to Saladin's elder brother, Turanshah, to join Saladin in Egypt, but his intentions were sinister. Nur al-Din empowered Turanshah to supervise Saladin hoping to provoke dissention

¹³⁹ Al-Bundari, 125-6.

¹⁴⁰ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 527 (quoting Ibn Shaddad).

between the brothers and to undermine their position in Egypt.¹⁴¹ If indeed these were Nur al-Din's hopes he must have been very disappointed. The two brothers cooperated, especially during the Battle of the Blacks in which Turanshah's contribution to the Ayyubid victory was invaluable. Nur al-Din's permission given to Saladin's father, Najm al-Din, to join his sons in Egypt is explained in the same manner. Najm al-Din was instructed by Nur al-Din to ensure that Abbasid suzerainty was proclaimed in Egypt, a move that Saladin was reluctant to undertake.¹⁴² Although Nur al-Din failed in his schemes to create rivalry and to provoke a rupture between members of the Ayyubid family in Egypt, the extended Ayyubid family was not necessarily united behind Saladin. Geographically the family was split between Egypt and Syria, and some of its members continued to serve Nur al-Din.¹⁴³

b. *Yemen and Africa*

We must admit that we have very limited ability to penetrate far behind the facade of political history deeper into the motives of the main actors on the political scene. We are unable to judge whether Ibn al-Athir is correct in stating that the conquest of Yemen and Nubia were motivated by Saladin's fear of Nur al-Din. What we can do is to put some of Saladin's policies into the wider context of Fatimid history. When examined from this perspective, the question of his motives for the conquest of Yemen, Nubia and North Africa appears less important. Saladin's policies, whatever the immediate reasons may have been behind them, were in line with the traditional policies of his Fatimid predecessors.

Fatimid association with Yemen had a long history going back to the early period of the clandestine activities of the Isma'ili movement. As rulers of Egypt the Fatimids maintained diverse connections with Yemen. At the time of Turanshah's invasion of Yemen, there were a number of local dynasties in the region with various Isma'ili affiliations; some of them were pro-Fatimid while others were hostile to Fatimid Ismailism. Turanshah's conquests in Yemen were not private ventures; they were Saladin's official policy sus-

¹⁴¹ Ibn Furat, IV, pt,1, 82 also 66.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 88-9.

¹⁴³ For instance, in 566/1170-1171, Shirkuh's son, Muhammad, was in Syria in Nur al-Din's service. See, Ibn Furat, IV, pt,1, 111.

tained over a period of time.¹⁴⁴ As a result of these Ayyubid efforts South Yemen, including Aden, came under their control. It is possible to present a variety of reasons for the Ayyubid expeditions to Yemen, it is more difficult to establish their relative importance. The desire to exert influence over Yemen and especially the port of Aden, through which passed the flow of the Indian trade to Egypt, was a strong motive behind Fatimid, and subsequently Ayyubid, interest in the region.¹⁴⁵ Commercial considerations may have coincided with other reasons. One of these may have been a clash of personalities and interests between Saladin and Turanshah. Saladin was very generous in conferring wealth on Turanshah who was given lucrative sources of income in Egypt. But this does not exclude the possibility that Turanshah desired more wealth and a separate patrimony. The sources at our disposal are reticent on these points. The absence of information may be due to the fact that only a part of contemporary twelfth-century historical writings survive: more probably it reflects a hesitation by contemporary writers to deal with this sensitive issue, which touched on internal relations within the Ayyubid family. Perhaps the most insightful account of these events is supplied by Maqrizi who, in the fifteenth century, had at his disposal a greater variety of sources than we have today. Although we cannot judge how accurately he used his sources. In any case, Maqrizi's starting point is similar to that of Ibn al-Athir: the Ayyubids fearing a possible invasion of Egypt by Nur al-Din wished to acquire a faraway territory as a place of refuge. The conquest of Nubia proved useless due to the poverty of the region.¹⁴⁶ Turanshah's own interest in Yemen was aroused by the agitation of 'Umara and it tallied with

¹⁴⁴ For details, see Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 98, 99, 101, 113, 114.

¹⁴⁵ For a detailed examination of the sources and research literature, see G. R. Smith, *The Ayyubids and Early Rasulids in the Yemen*, (London, 1978), II, 31-47, esp., 47. A. Hamdani points out that at the time of the Ayyubid invasion of Yemen there were in the region Isma'ili communities with pro- and anti-Fatimid leanings. According to him, Ayyubid effort was concentrated against the Fatimid supporters. See, his "The Tayyibi-Fatimid Community of the Yemen at the Time of the Ayyubid Conquest of Southern Arabia", *Arabian Studies*, VII (1985), 151-6, esp., 151-2. For the commerce that passed through the port of Aden, see G. R. Smith, "Have You Anything to Declare ? Maritime Trade and Commerce in Ayyubid Aden. Practices and Taxes", *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 25(1995), 127-140; "More on the Port Practices and Taxes of Medieval Aden", *New Arabian Studies*, 3(1996), 208-10.

¹⁴⁶ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 73.

his wish to extend his personal possessions. But Turanshah's private interests were in line with those of Saladin, who authorized the expedition to Yemen and assisted Turanshah.¹⁴⁷ It seems to me that we can improve very little on Maqrizi's account. We can conclude by saying that the conquest of Yemen epitomizes the convergence of Ayyubid interests, as the rulers of Egypt, with Ayyubid interests as a family in conflict with Nur al-Din, which was also beset by internal difficulties.

Very similar reasons were behind the Ayyubid conquest of Nubia. Muslim Egypt had a long history of relations with Nubia. In the seventh century, following the conquest of Egypt, Arab attempts to conquer Nubia met with little success. In 640, the Arabs suffered a humiliating defeat due to superior Nubian archery. In 651, an Arab invasion of Nubia ended in a peace treaty according to which the Nubians agreed to supply the Arabs with slaves in exchange for foodstuffs and other commodities. This agreement is known as a pact (*baqt*) and its supposed text is reproduced by Maqrizi. The existence of some kind of peace treaty between the Arabs and the Nubians is alluded to in a letter sent in 758 by the governor of Egypt to the king of Nubia. This treaty, among its other provisions, guaranteed the safety of merchants travelling across the border between the two regions.¹⁴⁸ Following the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, an envoy was dispatched to the king of Nubia asking him to embrace Islam and demanding the delivery of slaves according to the *baqt* agreement. Upon his return, the Fatimid envoy presented to Imam al-ʿAziz (975-996) a book describing the territories and people he had visited. In the sources for the Fatimid period there are scattered references to the delivery of gifts by the Nubians according to the *baqt* agreement. During the period of Badr al-Jamali's military dictatorship, the overriding Fatimid interest in Nubia was to secure freedom of travel for Muslim merchants and the protection of mosques. The relations between the two countries oscillated between peace and war. The last significant event in the relations between Nubia and Fatimid Egypt was a large-scale Nubian incursion into Upper Egypt in 1161.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁴⁸ For the Arab attempts to conquer Nubia and the *baqt* agreement, see D. Ayalon, "The Nubian Dam", *JSAI*, 12(1989), 372-90, where the relevant sources and studies are cited.

¹⁴⁹ For the Fatimid mission to Nubia, see H. M. Khier, "A Contribution to a

Although Ibn al-Athir followed by Maqrizi states that the Ayyubid conquest of Nubia was motivated by the fear of Nur al-Din, the beginning of Ayyubid involvement in this region, as Maqrizi's own narrative proves, was different. In Dhu 'l-Hijja 567/July-August 1172, the Nubians raided villages in the vicinity of Aswan.¹⁵⁰ In 568/1172-1173, Aswan was besieged by 'abid (i.e. former black Fatimid soldiers) who came from Nubia. The governor of Aswan, Kanz al-Dawla, himself a former Fatimid emir, asked for reinforcements, but those arrived after the 'abid had already left the area.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, further Ayyubid forces led by Turanshah arrived in Aswan and invaded Nubia conquering the town of Ibrim. Ibrim was given as an *iqta'* to a Kurdish emir of Turanshah who settled there with unemployed Kurdish troops. From Ibrim they raided the region. The Nubians asked Turanshah for an armistice and sent him a delegation. Although Turanshah's reply was militant he dispatched an envoy to the king of Nubia in Danqla. Upon his return the envoy described in gloomy terms the poverty of the region and of Danqla itself.¹⁵² It seems that the Ayyubids were dragged into involvement in Nubia as a result of the need to protect Aswan and Upper Egypt and, at a certain stage, they went to explore the possibility of further expansion in the area. But they, like the Fatimids before them, were discouraged by the poverty of the region in which the Muslim rulers of Egypt never had a real interest. There was a sequel to the Ayyubid involvement in Nubia of 568/1172-1173. In 570/1174-1175, Kanz al-Dawla revolted against his Ayyubid masters with the intention of restoring Fatimid rule. His main supporters are identified as Bedouin and Blacks (*sudan*), but the rebellion enjoyed the support of a multitude of other people as well. Coincidental, or even co-ordinated, with Kanz al-Dawla's rebellion was an uprising of a certain person named 'Abbas ibn Shadi

Textual Problem", *AI*, 21 (1985), 9-72. For the subsequent Fatimid relations with Nubia, see B. I. Beshir, "New Light on Nubian Fatimid Relations", *Arabica*, XXII (1975), 15-25; M. R. Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt*, (Princeton, 1980), 65, 68, 70, 289.

¹⁵⁰ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 69.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 72. Ibn Abi Tayy does not distinguish between these two separate attacks. He combines them together by saying that the Blacks (*sudan*) and 'abid laid siege to Aswan. See, Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 531.

¹⁵² Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 532-3 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy); Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 72.

who overrun Qus. Both rebellions were crushed by Saladin's brother al-Malik al-^ʿAdil.¹⁵³

The beginnings of Ayyubid involvement in North Africa are presented by Maqrizi as a predatory raid of a limited scope. In 567/1171-1172, Saladin went to Alexandria: he was troubled by having many followers and little money. His attention was drawn to the Barqa region, which was described to him as a rich one and inhabited only by Bedouin. This matter was discussed at a family council in Alexandria and it was decided that Taqi al-Din would launch an expedition with a force of 500 cavalry. A great deal of attention was given to the public aspects of the impending campaign. In order to justify the raid letters were sent to the Bedouin tribes in the region rebuking them for the robbery of travellers and requiring them to pay the alms-tax (*zakat*) which, according to the law, was to be collected from their livestock. In the following year, Sharf al-Din Qaraqush, an emir of Taqi al-Din, conquered the town of Tripoli in Libya with an army composed of Turks and Bedouin.¹⁵⁴ In 571/1175-1176 and 583/1187-1188, Qaraqush continued his raids in North Africa which culminated with the conquest of Qayrawan and brought the Ayyubids into conflict with the Almohades.¹⁵⁵

c. Syria

In 570/1174-1175, a short time after the death of Nur al-Din, Qadi al-Fadil sent a letter to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad.¹⁵⁶ This is

¹⁵³ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 79-80. Ibn Shaddad, 47-8, says that they were Blacks (*sudan*). He is misquoted by Abu Shama who says '*abid*'. See, I, pt,2, 601. Banu Kanz were an Arab family of Bedouin origin, the Rabi'a tribe, from Arabia. They arrived to Egypt at the time of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861) and settled in Upper Egypt. One of their chieftains captured the rebel Abu Rukwa in the early eleventh century and was handsomely rewarded by the Fatimid Imam al-Hakim, who bestowed on him the honorific title Kanz al-Dawla and invested him with the governorship of Upper Egypt. See, Maqrizi, *Al-Bayan wa-l-'rab 'amma bi Ard Misr min al-A'rab*, (ed) A. 'Abidin (Cairo, 1961), 44-6.

¹⁵⁴ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 69; Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 547-8.

¹⁵⁵ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 82-3, 125.

¹⁵⁶ This letter is summarized by Ehrenkreutz (*Saladin*, 133-4) and Lyons and Jackson (97-8). A more comprehensive discussion is provided by H. Dajani-Shakeel, who to great extent misinterprets this document. The author sees the letter as a reflection of Saladin's perception of the Holy War. But the letter is not an exposition of Saladin's thoughts on the Holy War, and the many references to it are of instrumental character. Dajani-Shakeel admits that Qadi al-Fadil while writing

a document of a paramount significance; in it Saladin presents his credentials and asks for the legitimization of his rule. Qadi al-Fadil describes Saladin as a dedicated warrior of the Holy War, whose goal is to fight the Crusaders and ultimately to restore Jerusalem to Islam. The letter begins by setting forth Saladin's personal and familial services to the cause of Islam. The Ayyubids are depicted as a family of warriors dedicated to the Holy War whose beginnings were in Syria.¹⁵⁷ But their achievements there were ascribed to others (meaning of course Nur al-Din).¹⁵⁸ The situation in Egypt, on the eve of the arrival of the Ayyubids, is described in bleak terms: the country was mismanaged and the regime corrupt.¹⁵⁹ The Crusaders posed a very real threat and they extorted vast sums of money from Egypt. Sunni Islam was in a deplorable position, and harmful Shi'ite practices prevailed.¹⁶⁰

Intervention in the affairs of Egypt—a policy sponsored by Nur al-Din—is presented as an exclusively Ayyubid endeavor. They hastened to Egypt and brought with them a large army and vast financial resources.¹⁶¹ The Ayyubid efforts paid off. The Crusaders who had subdued Egypt, its villages and provinces (a gross exaggeration), were expelled.¹⁶² And the Ayyubids also overcame internal elements which endangered Egypt such as the Blacks and Christian Armenians. Qadi al-Fadil goes into some detail in describing the position of the Blacks in Fatimid Egypt. They were very prominent and had at their disposal vast sums of money. But the Blacks showed little zeal for fighting the unbelievers (i.e. the Crusaders) and regarded the Fatimid ruler (literally: the dweller of the palace) as their God.¹⁶³ Also the Christian Armenians en-

this letter had practical objectives in mind, gaining recognition from the Caliph and securing the Caliph's investiture for Saladin. See, "A Reassessment of Some Medieval and Modern Perception of the Counter-Crusade", in H. Dajani-Shakeel and R. A. Messier (eds), *The Jihad and its Time*, Dedicated to Andrew Stefan Ehrenkreutz, (Ann Arbor, 1991), 58, 59-63.

¹⁵⁷ Qadi al-Fadil refers to Saladin in the first person plural. Literally, the text says "we (Saladin), our father (Ayyub) and our uncle (Shirkuh)". See, Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 616, ll, 16-7.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 617, ll, 2-3.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 617, l, 5.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 617, ll, 6-7, 7-11.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 617, ll, 12-3.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 617, ll, 13-22, 618, l, 2.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 618, ll, 4-5, 5-6, 8.

joyed an exalted position in Fatimid Egypt.¹⁶⁴ Qadi al-Fadil exaggerates (wildly) the numbers of black troops by saying that they numbered 100,000 soldiers.¹⁶⁵ Exaggeration is a prominent feature of Qadi al-Fadil's letter. For example, the Christian forces that attacked Damietta are described as 200,000 strong and the navy as made up of 1,000 warships and merchantmen.¹⁶⁶

The list of Saladin's achievements as enumerated by Qadi al-Fadil is a long one. Saladin saved Damietta from the threat of the Crusaders, and Cairo from the danger of the Blacks and Armenians. He also rendered the Fatimid ruler powerless.¹⁶⁷ Saladin not only staved off internal and external threats to Egypt, he actively pursued the Holy War. A lot of good will and a considerable stretch of the imagination is needed to accept Qadi al-Fadil's depiction of Saladin as a warrior of the Holy War. By 1174, Saladin's achievements in the war against the Crusaders were very modest at the most. But Qadi al-Fadil evades these difficulties by speaking in general terms, and by unwarranted boasting. Every year, he says, Holy War is carried out by land and naval raids. The strategic importance of the conquest of the stronghold off Ayla from the Franks and its implications are greatly overstated.¹⁶⁸ According to Qadi al-Fadil, this stronghold posed a danger to the coast of Arabia, the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina as well as Yemen. In the internal Islamic context Saladin is portrayed as a warrior against heretics in Yemen, and as one who restored Abbasid sovereignty in North Africa.¹⁶⁹

One of the most illuminating sections of Qadi al-Fadil's letter is the description of Egypt's relations with the Christian world. Byzantium is described as an ancient and worn-out kingdom which had subdued other Christian states. The emperor is referred to as Goliath and the greatest tyrant. Qadi al-Fadil continues by saying that naval battles were fought with the Byzantines but also open and secret negotiations were conducted with them.¹⁷⁰ He mentions the failure of Byzantium and the Crusaders at Damietta and

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 618, II, 9-10.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 618, I, 7.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 619, II, 1-2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 619, II, 1-2, 6, 8-9.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 619, II, 12-3, 16-8.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 620, II, 1-2, 7-8, 15.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 621, II, 4-7.

the defeat of the Normans at Alexandria.¹⁷¹ Very revealing is Qadi al-Fadil's characterization of Egypt's relations with the Italian cities of Venice, Pisa and Genoa. He says that sometimes the Italians launch destructive raids while on other occasions they come as merchants, who export weapons and other products to Egypt.¹⁷²

But the essential part of the letter is that devoted to the situation in Syria in the wake of Nur al-Din's death. Qadi al-Fadil describes the political disintegration in Syria; many petty rulers have emerged, and the Crusaders have built strongholds which endanger Muslim territories. Internal squabbles among the members of the ruling elite of Nur al-Din's former state added to the disarray.¹⁷³ In their internal struggles they brought in the Crusaders and allied themselves with them. In such circumstances, Qadi al-Fadil says, the re-conquest of Jerusalem from the Crusaders is impossible,¹⁷⁴ and the Ayyubids who operate from Egypt are unable to ameliorate this situation. Qadi al-Fadil describes how the distance of Egypt from Syria impedes military operations.¹⁷⁵ It might have been different, he continues, had the Ayyubids been neighbors of the Crusaders in Palestine. Then they would have been able to wage war on the Crusaders, and to put the affairs of Syria in order.¹⁷⁶ And Saladin would have been able to protect Nur al-Din's son, who is under the tutelage of persons ruling in his name.¹⁷⁷ Qadi al-Fadil re-assures the Caliph that Saladin's sole purpose is to strengthen the Abbasid dynasty, the Sunni cause and the Islamic community.¹⁷⁸ A promise is made to the Caliph that, as it was the case in Egypt, Yemen and North Africa, any other future Ayyubid conquests will be carried out in the name of the Abbasids.¹⁷⁹ Qadi al-Fadil presents Saladin also as the protector of Jerusalem and its future conqueror.¹⁸⁰ But Qadi al-Fadil touches on another issue as well. The idea of establishing Ayyubid hereditary rule (passed from Saladin to his son or brother) is clearly stated.¹⁸¹

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 621, II, 11-7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 621, II, 18-20, 622, II, 1-3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 622, II, 9-10, 11-3.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 622, II, 14-5.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 622, II, 17-8.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 622, II, 18-21.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 622, I, 21, 623, II, 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 623, I, 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 623, II, 5-6.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 623, II, 8-12.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 623, I, 7.

d. *In Search of Legitimacy*

It is quite clear that upon Nur al-Din's death Saladin wished to establish his rule on a legal basis. Saladin had to win acceptance and legitimacy for his rule from two distinct segments of Muslim society: the Kurdish-Turkish military class and the civilian society at large, especially the elite. Thus the question of legitimacy has two separate facets which, nonetheless, are to some degree also interdependent. Certain aspects of Saladin's rule and personality that appealed to members of his family and the military class were not necessarily instrumental in winning support from wider circles of the Muslim society and vice-versa. The question is: within the context of Saladin's efforts to win legitimacy for his rule, why did he write to Baghdad and what did he hope to achieve from the Caliph?

The Caliph was regarded as the supreme leader of the Muslims, who held ultimate power to invest regional leaders, like Nur al-Din and Saladin, with legal authority. However, due to the Caliph's weak position caliphal investiture had little practical meaning.¹⁸² Nonetheless, it was much sought after by both Nur al-Din and Saladin and even by more distant Muslim rulers such as the Almoravids of the Maghreb.¹⁸³ Caliphal investiture was viewed differently by the two main segments of the society whose support and recognition Saladin sought. For the Kurdish-Turkish military class caliphal investiture had apparently a restricted significance only, but it carried far greater weight with the civilian elite, who served the ruler, and with the general populace.

In his letter to Baghdad, Qadi al-Fadil makes extensive use of the motif of the Holy War and presents Saladin as an champion of the Abbasid cause and of Sunni Islam. These two themes permeate the letter. Within this term of reference Qadi al-Fadil sets forth Saladin's political programme. A remote goal, the conquest of Jerusalem, is used to provide justification for more immediate action—Saladin's intervention in Syria. Qadi al-Fadil is at pains to convince the Caliph that Saladin's actions in Syria will serve

¹⁸² These points are fully discussed by R. S. Humphreys, "Legitimacy and Political Instability in Islam in the Age of the Crusades", in *The Jihad and its Time*, 6-7. For Saladin's relations with Baghdad, mostly after 1174, see, E. Sivan, "Saladin et le Calif Nasir", *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, (Jerusalem, 1972), 126-45.

¹⁸³ R. A. Messier, "The Almoravids and the Holy War", in *The Jihad and its Time*, 23-4.

his interests too. Saladin's very modest achievements in the war against the Crusaders were grossly exaggerated by Qadi al-Fadil, who attempts to portray Saladin as a warrior dedicated to the Holy War. Moreover, the motive of the Holy War is used to justify impending wars which would inevitably bring Saladin into confrontation with Muslims rather than the Crusaders. In fact Qadi al-Fadil invented and promulgated the myth of Saladin the warrior of the Holy War many years before Saladin had achieved any real success in that war.

The notion that dedication to the Holy War is an important factor which entitles legitimacy was consolidated only during Nur al-Din's rule. Qadi al-Fadil was hardly original in his propaganda; he merely followed the example set by Nur al-Din and his propagandists. As we mentioned earlier Nur al-Din assumed the title of *mujahid*, warrior of the Holy War, early on in his rule (1149). In contrast with Nur al-Din, Zangi did not adopt the title *mujahid* during his reign, not even after the conquest of Edessa in 1144. As Emmanuel Sivan has pointed out, the image of Zangi as a warrior dedicated to the Holy War was created by historians of the thirteenth century like Ibn al-Athir, Ibn al-'Adim and Abu Shama rather than by his twelfth-century contemporaries. However, with Nur al-Din's ascent to the throne the idea of *jihad* came to the fore.¹⁸⁴ The theme of Jerusalem figured prominently in the poetry of Nur al-Din's court poets and panegyrists such as Ibn al-Qaysarani and 'Imad al-Din and the conquest of the town became Nur al-Din's declared goal. As a manifestation of his serious intent, Nur al-Din ordered the construction of a special *minbar* (pulpit) to be installed at the Aqsa mosque upon the conquest of Jerusalem. But the *minbar* was not merely a religious artefact it served as a symbol signifying the throne and political authority.¹⁸⁵ The *minbar* like *jihad* epitom-

¹⁸⁴ See, his *L'Islam et la Croisade*, 42-5; ch.4.

¹⁸⁵ For Zangid court poets, see Dajani-Shakeel, "Jihad in Twelfth-Century Arabic Poetry", 97, 108-9. For the political meaning of *minbar*, see Tabbaa, 230-1, 234. The conquest of Jerusalem was not among Nur al-Din's achievements, and the work on the *minbar* which took some years might have been seen as rather premature if not completely ridiculous. However, 'Imad al-Din provides an explanation for Nur al-Din's deed. In a clearly apologetic vein, he says that Nur al-Din continued work on the pulpit knowing that he was not destined to conquer Jerusalem. What 'Imad al-Din wrote about Nur al-Din resembles a motive which was widely employed by Fatimid (Isma'ili) authors. The Fatimid Imam is portrayed as investing efforts in something he knows that only his successors would achieve. The aim is to explain in retrospective the failures of previous Imams

mized the fusion of religion and politics in twelfth-century Muslim Middle East. In 1174, Saladin was desperate for recognition and Qadi al-Fadil's attempt to legitimize his rule by employing the idea of the Holy War was unconvincing. However, later, as has been pointed out by Hannes Möhring, following the conquest of Jerusalem, Saladin came to be identified as the Messiah (Mahdi). His identification with Joseph of the Koran and Muslim popular lore began even earlier going back to his early career in Damascus and his own declaration from 1176.¹⁸⁶

Conclusions: Saladin was a typical *Heerkönig* of the Muslim high middle ages. His unprecedented achievements in the Holy War overshadowed the fact that he began his bid for power as an usurper. Although Holy War supplied the central element in the legitimization of Saladin's rule it was compounded by other concepts such as the rule of justice, Abbasid recognition, identification with Joseph and Messianic expectations. It proved to be a powerful mix elevating Saladin far above other rulers of his age.

especially in matters of a wide public character such as wars. By implication it can be understood that Saladin is Nur al-Din's true heir in accomplishing what his overlord failed to achieve.

¹⁸⁶ "Zwischen Joseph-Legende und Mahdi-Erwartung: Erfolge und Ziele Sultan Saladins im Spiegel zeitgenössischer Dichtung and Weissagung", in *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th-15th Centuries*, (ed) Y. Lev (Leiden, 1997), 177-225.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONSOLIDATION OF SALADIN'S RULE

1. *The Dismemberment of the Fatimid State*

a. *The Appropriation of Urban Properties*

I. The consolidation of Saladin's rule in Egypt involved the dismemberment of the Fatimid state and the imposition of Sunni Islam. The expropriation of Fatimid properties assisted Saladin in the implementation of his religious policies. We must take into account the fact that Saladin took possession of a country which was economically disrupted and of which some regions were partly destroyed. The capital was considerably affected by the wars which ravaged Egypt during the sixth decade of the twelfth century. In 1164, during the struggle between the Fatimid viziers Dirgham and Shawar, sections of the capital were set on fire.¹ Following the destruction and dispersal of the former Fatimid black and Armenian troops by Saladin, residential quarters inside and outside Cairo were left vacant and available for new uses.² The burning of Fustat by Shawar was a catastrophe on an unprecedented scale, although parts of the town remained relatively intact. Many of those who fled Fustat sought refuge in Cairo which became overpopulated. Shirkuh, during his short vizierate, was personally involved in attempts to encourage the refugees to return to Fustat. The immediate effects of the misfortunes that befell the capital were a decline in population and economic activity. Other Egyptian towns suffered no less. Bilbays, for example, was destroyed by the Crusaders and its population was massacred and enslaved. In the tenth century the town was an important center for the provision of the Holy Cities of Arabia with flour and bread (*ka'k*), and many mills operated in it.³ Alexandria was depopulated, too. In 1167, dur-

¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 19.

² In the course of the Battle of the Blacks, the House of the Armenians, which was located near the complex of the Fatimid palaces, at the very heart of Cairo, was set on fire by Saladin's forces. The quarters which were inhabited by the Blacks were Baha' al-Din, inside Cairo, and al-Mansuriyya, outside the walls. See, Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 2, 3, 29-30.

³ Muqaddasi, *Kitab Ahsan al-Ta'asim*, (ed) M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1967), (reprint), 195.

ing the siege of Shawar and the Crusaders, famine ravaged the town taking heavy toll in human lives and many inhabitants fled the beleaguered town. As a result of the fighting orchards around the town were destroyed, too.⁴

In fact the whole Mediterranean coast of Egypt was in decline due to the wars of the Crusades. Economically it was a very important region. In the tenth-eleventh centuries, the towns of Farama, Tinnis and Damietta were prosperous centers of the textile industry and also played a role in Mediterranean trade. In addition, commercial fishing in the shallow waters of the lakes of Tinnis and Burullus provided a valuable source of food and generated income for the state.⁵ Tinnis and other coastal towns of Egypt were attacked by a fleet of twenty galleys during Amalric's advance against Cairo in 1169. This fleet intended to sail from Tinnis up the Nile to assist the advancing Crusading land army. However, the water-ways leading from Tinnis to the inland were blocked by Muslim boats.⁶ In 545/1150-1511, Farama suffered a devastating raid by the Crusaders. In 1169, the Crusaders found the town deserted by its inhabitants and the dikes which prevented sea floods had collapsed. The littoral was covered by a shallow sea rich in fish.⁷ The rural areas suffered as much as the towns. The armies that invaded Egypt lived off the land collecting taxes and seizing provisions from the villages on their way. Shirkuh did so twice; in 1164 and in 1167. The regions that suffered most were those around Bilbays and Alexandria, but Upper Egypt was ravaged by Shirkuh's forces as well.⁸

II. The collapse of the Fatimid dynasty produced little booty in the form of cash and the torturing of the Fatimid eunuch, who formerly had been in charge of the palaces, revealed nothing.⁹

⁴ Lyons and Jackson, 17.

⁵ For the textile industries and trade in Tinnis, in the middle of the eleventh century, see Nasir-i Khusrau, *Book of Travels (Safarnama)*, translated into English by W. M. Thackston Jr. (N. Y., 1986), 39-40; R. B. Serjant, "Material for the History of Islamic Textiles up to the Mongol Conquest", *Ars Islamica*, XIII-XIV (1948), 90-4. For fishing in lake Burullus, in the 1130's, see G. A. Khan, "A Copy of a Decree from the Archives of the Fatimid Chancery in Egypt", *BSAOS*, XLIX (1986), 441-3.

⁶ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 346; William of Tyre, II, 353-4.

⁷ Ibn Muyassar, 144; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 201; William of Tyre, II, 362.

⁸ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 365, 366, 370; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 142.

⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 284.

What Saladin could divide among his supporters were urban and rural properties. Both types of properties were allocated to Saladin's emirs following the Battle of the Blacks and this practice continued on a grand scale after the overthrow of the Fatimid dynasty. The division of these properties was a reward for service and loyalty and was also instrumental in creating long-term ties between Saladin's emirs, the new ruling elite, and Egypt—a country in which they had quite unexpectedly acquired vested interests. In Fustat-Cairo there was a massive concentration of buildings and various commercial properties which belonged to the former Fatimid state and members of the ruling establishment including the royal family. All these properties were appropriated by the new regime and re-assigned for accommodation, commercial use and the foundation of new types of religious institutions.

The urban landscape of Cairo was dominated by the huge palace complex which included two separate buildings: the Great Eastern Palace, and the Lesser Western Palace. The Persian traveller, Nasir-i Khusrau, who visited Cairo in 1047-1048, says that when looking at Cairo from a distance the palace complex, due to its size and height, appeared like a mountain. An empty space around the complex isolated the palaces from the adjacent bustling city. The palaces were only accessible through a small number of gates which were known by different names. The palaces were made up of different structures designated by the term *qa'a*. These *qa'as* were very large structures which combined a covered central hall, used normally for receptions, flanked by halls open at their ends (*iwans*). Nasir-i Khusrau was admitted into the interior of one of the Fatimid palaces, but he was too dazzled by the occasion and the splendor of the internal decoration to leave a detailed description. A description more contemporary with the period of Saladin's takeover of Egypt is provided by the Frankish historian William of Tyre, who refers to underground passages that connected the various buildings within the palace complex. The palace complex could accommodate 12,000 people, but the overall number of the court personnel was even higher than that.¹⁰ Within the palace

¹⁰ Nasir-i Khusrau, 45-6, 56-7; William of Tyre, II, 319-20; cf. R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture. Form, Function and Meaning*, (N. Y., 1994), 435. In the context of palace architecture *qa'a* meant an audience hall. But this term appears also in the context of residential architecture. See, H. I. Sayed, "The Development of the Cairene *Qa'a*: Some Considerations", *AI*, 23(1987), 31-53; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, (Berkeley, 1983), IV, 69-70.

complex were also located the administrative organs of the state as well as a great variety of assorted storerooms and treasuries. Other Fatimid palaces were built outside the walls of Cairo. The preferred sites were in proximity to water: the Nile, lakes and canals. In Fustat-Cairo there were also palaces built by some of the powerful Fatimid viziers such as Ya'qub ibn Killis and Badr al-Jamali. In addition to palaces, members of the Fatimid royal family and people of the ruling establishment owned many commercial properties in Fustat-Cairo such as shops, markets, covered markets, bathhouses and whole residential blocks. People of this class also owned many commercially valuable orchards in the capital itself and its environs.

Following the demise of the Fatimid state, the personnel of the court, slaves and slave-girls, was dispersed by Qaraqush, Saladin's supervisor of the palaces. He kept some of them, but most were set free or sold. Some of the treasure found in the palaces was sent as gifts or tributes to Nur al-Din shortly before his death and other items were sold over a long period of time. The houses and residential blocks that were owned by members of the Fatimid royal family and other persons from the former elite were either confiscated and redistributed among the new elite or sold by the new regime. Most of the Lesser Western Palace was allocated to Saladin's brother al-Malik al-Adil.¹¹ Saladin's father lived in another Fatimid royal building; the Pearl Pavilion, which was situated outside the Qantara Gate of Cairo overlooking the Cairo Canal (*khalij*) and Kafur's Garden. Although this area was destroyed by fire during the war between Dirgham and Shawar, the Pearl Pavilion was regarded as one of the most beautiful of all of the Fatimid palaces.¹² Saladin chose as his residence the former palace of the Fatimid viziers and his brother, Turanshah, settled in Cairo in a quarter formerly occupied by Fatimid emirs.¹³ Sections of the Eastern Palace were given to Saladin's emirs and administrators for their use. One of them took as his residence the palace of the Fatimid princess Sitt al-Mulk (who died in the early 1020s). But later this palace became the property of the Ayyubid family.¹⁴

¹¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 215, 394.

¹² For the history of this building, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 348-51.

¹³ *Ibid.*, III, 59-60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 184-5, 247, 295, 394-5; IV, 259.

Other sections of the Fatimid palace complex were turned into public buildings such as law colleges and hospitals. The hospital that Saladin founded in Cairo (Dhu 'l-Qa' da 577/March-April 1182) was located in one of the ancient *qa'as* of the Fatimid palace complex which had been built in 384/994-995. The costs of running this hospital were covered by renting out properties that belonged to the state (*riba' al-sultaniyya*), and grain was provided from the Fayyum district. Saladin also re-opened an ancient hospital in Fustat. But it was a far more modest institution; its budget was financed from the revenues of the Office of the Pious Endowments.¹⁵

Saladin and his nephew, Taqi al-Din, made use of Fatimid buildings such as the jail, covered markets and palaces for the foundation of law colleges. Taqi al-Din was the owner of many properties in the capital. He established his residence in one of the oldest Fatimid palaces, known as Manazil al-'Izz, which commanded a pleasant view of the Nile. It was built by the mother of the Fatimid Imam al-'Aziz (975-996), and became a pleasure palace of the subsequent Fatimid rulers. In 1171, Taqi al-Din bought this palace with adjacent properties, which included a bathhouse and stables, from the state. He used the palace to set up a richly endowed law college.¹⁶ In 569/1173-1174, at Cairo, Saladin established a *khanqa* for the Sufis. The *khanqa* was established in a former Fatimid palace, known as Dar Sa'id al-Su'ada. The palace of Sa'id al-Su'ada was an eleventh-century building constructed by a eunuch and freedman of the Fatimid ruler al-Mustansir (1036-1094).¹⁷ This institution was supported by a pious endowment, which included urban and rural properties. When Saladin established his law colleges in Cairo he did the same: these institutions were located within the Dar al-Wizara—the former palace of the Fatimid viziers in Cairo.¹⁸

The example set by the Ayyubid ruling family was emulated by members of the ruling establishment, which used former Fatimid

¹⁵ *Ibid*, II, 251; cf. N. D. MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo. A Topographical Study*, (Cairo, 1992), 143-4. For the term *rub'* (pl. *riba'*), see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, IV, 13-4. For its Coptic equivalent, see Jean-Claude Garcin, "Toponymie et topographie urbaines médiévales à Fustat et au Caire", *JESHO*, XXVII (1984), 122, n. 25. For *riba' sultaniyya* in the Fatimid period, see Sayyid, 342-4; Lev, *State*, 66.

¹⁶ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 397, IV, 194.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, IV, 273.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, IV, 196.

buildings to set up law colleges. In 570/1174-1175, one of Saladin's Kurdish emirs established the first law college in Cairo. This institution was located in a section of Dar al-Dibaj which originally had been built as a palace by the renowned Fatimid vizier Ya'qub ibn Killis (d. 989). Later it served as a workshop for the production and sale of silk brocades.¹⁹

b. *Investments in the Urban Economy*

All elements of the elite, Saladin's family, emirs and civilian administrators invested in the urban economy of the capital. Their investments involved the foundation of entirely new businesses and the purchaser of formerly Fatimid properties from the state and their conversion to commercial uses. Taqi al-Din's business activities exemplify this twofold approach. He bought two large properties from the state: the palace of Manazil al-'Izz and the island of Jazira (which lay between Fustat and the west bank of the Nile). In addition he set up two new *funduqs* (meaning here: urban caravanserais) and a tenement block (*rab'*).²⁰ Another Fatimid palace, known as al-Nafi, was bought by an Ayyubid emir who at first used it as a stable, and then converted it into a *funduq*. A bathhouse, which was part of the complex of the Western Palace, proved to be a valuable property. In 1195 it was sold by its owner, a *cadi*, to an emir at the high price of 12,000 *dinars*. In the context of the urban economy, bathhouses were viable businesses and as such much sought for by the new ruling elite. A military slave of Shirkuh appropriated for himself a bathhouse in one of the best locations in Cairo: in the vicinity of Dar al-Wizara, the palace of the former Fatimid viziers. In the same area, another bathhouse became the property of one of Shirkuh's emirs.²¹

A common practice in the early years of Saladin's rule was the purchase from the state of tracts of land in the capital. The formal act of acquisition of properties from the *diwan* (i.e. the state office which was responsible for these properties) is frequently referred to in the sources. When Taqi al-Din decided to designate Manazil al-'Izz as a law college, he formally bought the building

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 343-4, III, 51.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 194; Ibn Duqmaq, *Kitab al-Intisar*, (ed) K. Vollers (Bulaq, 1891-1892), IV, 93-4, 109-110.

²¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 129-30, 135.

from the state. From a legal point of view, it was a necessary prerequisite to giving the building the status of lawfully acquired property and as such fitted for its new use. Other members of the elite bought properties either because similar legal considerations or because they were obliged to do so by the unwillingness of the state to hand out its assets for nothing. Whether they paid the full market price for these properties is unknown, but this practice was widespread. For example, the Hamra' district of Fustat was sold to an emir. He planted a garden there and built a new irrigation system, which included wells and water wheels.²² The Hamra' district was a very large area stretching along the Nile and was subdivided into three quarters. It was an ancient zone of Fustat, which dated from the time of Fustat's foundation, and was characterised by its Christian population, churches and monasteries. It is difficult to imagine that the whole area was sold to a single person or even that the whole of Hamra' had been deserted by its population. However, the conversion of a section of formerly residential area to agricultural use shows the extent of the depopulation of Fustat. Qadi al-Fadil also acquired extensive possessions in the capital. He bought from the state for a vast sum of money a large tract of land in the Luq area, which lay outside the walls of Cairo. It was good agricultural land from which the Nile had retreated (after 500/1106-1107) due to a shift in the course of the river. Qadi al-Fadil established a huge orchard on his land which supplied the capital with fresh fruit. It must have been a profitable enterprise. Qadi al-Fadil developed the area by erecting a mosque and other buildings there. After 660/1261-1262, the Nile reconquered large parts of these lands and destroyed Qadi al-Fadil's property. Another orchard was established on the site of what had formerly been the al-Mansuriyya quarter, after the black Fatimid troops had been expelled and their dwellings (*masakin*) razed.²³

²² Abu Salih (the Armenian), *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, translated into English with notes by B. T. A. Evetts (Oxford, 1895), 92. For the complex textual history of this work, see Den Heijer, 77-83.

²³ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 154, III, 29, 189-90, IV, 89.

c. *The Acquisition of Agricultural Land*

Agricultural land was acquired by the new elite by grants of *iqta'* or by seizure (the essence of the Ayyubid *iqta'* system is discussed in Chapter Four). The grants of *iqta'* could include agricultural land as well as whole districts and even towns. Members of Saladin's family enjoyed the greatest and the most profitable *iqta'*s. Saladin's brother, Turanshah, was rewarded with an immense *iqta'*. It included the towns of Qus and Aswan in Upper Egypt and the Red Sea port of 'Aydhab. In 568/1172-1173, the revenues from these regions were estimated ('*ibra*) at 266,000 *dinars*. The *iqta'* of Saladin's father included Alexandria and the Buhayra province.²⁴ *Iqta'* was conferred on both the military and civilians. For example, Baha' 'Ali, a jurist from Damascus, received the Basatin area in the capital as an *iqta'*. Whole regions were assigned to the military (Ghuzz and Turks) as *iqta'*. For instance, this happened with the province of Fayyum. But in 1180, the region was re-assigned to Taj al-Mulk Buri, Saladin's brother. Buri was a very rich person who indulged himself in expansive building projects for pleasure purposes. When Buri received Fayyum the revenues were estimated at 100,064 *dinars* per year. It represented a significant drop in comparison to the sum of 133,274 *dinars* which was derived from the Fayyum when this area had been allocated to the military several years earlier.²⁵ This data provides a very important indication for the potential danger inherent in the *iqta'* system; the deterioration of the land and a decline in the revenues it produced.

Although the *iqta'* system was the main instrument used by the new elite to tap the wealth of Egypt, there is also evidence for the seizure of agricultural land by powerful individuals from the military, who succeeded in converting this land into freely held private estates (*mulk*). A word of caution is necessary here. Data on the seizure of agricultural land emanates from Christian sources which were concerned with the plight of the monasteries. The question is how representative this data is? Does such information provide an indication of more wide-spread practices, or do it merely reflect something that happened to the more vulnerable Christian religious institutions? A further point must be taken into consideration: in all of the cases reported, the land taken

²⁴ *Ibid*, III, 59, IV, 270.

²⁵ Abu Salih, 3, 133, 141, 204.

from the monasteries had been received as grants from the Fatimid rulers. Given Muslim attitudes toward non-Muslims, these grants of land were rather unusual. Therefore, the seizure of these lands may have been seen as correcting an anomaly created by the previous regime. If this was indeed the case, these reports are not necessarily indicative of a more widespread practice. Among those who acquired lands, which had belonged to Christian religious institutions, was Saladin's brother, Tughtakin. He became the owner of land which had belonged to Christian churches in the Adawiya district. This area was also renowned for its quarries of yellow clay. Tughtakin set up gardens there and built some houses. How he acquired these lands remains unclear. However, in three other cases there is explicit information that the land was seized by force. In Jiza, the area on the west bank of the Nile opposite the capital, 30 feddan of land which had been presented as a gift to a local monastery by the Fatimid ruler al-Amir (1101-1130), were taken by Saladin's troops (Ghuzz). Two other identical incidents took place in the districts of Hulwan and Ashmunayn.²⁶

Another problem is what happened to villages in which black soldiers had lived during the Fatimid period. Ibn Abi Tayy mentions this practice and Maqrizi elaborates by saying that in certain villages, rural estates (*diya'*) and urban quarters (*mahalla*) the Blacks had special areas which were outside the jurisdiction of the governor.²⁷ Following the destruction and the dispersal of the black regiments by Saladin these lands became available for new uses. But how the new regime administered this land remains unknown. There were several options: these properties could have been divided as *iqta'* among the emirs, the emirs could have been allowed to seize the land and to convert it into *mulk*, or it could have been turned into state property.

2. Saladin's Religious Policy

a. Ismailism in Fatimid Egypt

I. During the whole period of Fatimid rule in Egypt, Sunni Islam remained a constant force in the life of the country. The grip of

²⁶ *Ibid*, 141, 183-4, 197-8, 248, 250.

²⁷ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 498; Lev, *State*, 94, n.6, where additional sources and studies are listed.

Ismailism on Egypt was never comprehensive and from the 1070's it was on the decline, evaporating almost entirely towards the end of Fatimid rule. Ismailism, to use an expression coined by S. M. Stern, was merely the state religion of Fatimid Egypt.²⁸ It was professed by the royal family and to some extent by the ruling establishment and the state maintained the institution of Isma'ili propaganda (*da'wa*), which was responsible for the dissemination of Ismailism in and outside Egypt. For the first one hundred years of Fatimid rule in Egypt, Fatimid law enjoyed a privileged position. But its predominant position was eroded under the military dictatorship of Badr al-Jamali. Even during the period in which Fatimid law had reigned supreme, Sunni legal schools and Sunni jurists were active in Fustat and the provinces. A rare insight into the attitude of Sunni men of religion toward the Fatimid state is offered by Maqrizi's biography of Sharf al-Din al-Buni (c.1126-1206). Al-Buni was a Maliki jurist from the town of Buna in Tunisia. At some unknown date he arrived to Alexandria and lived in Cairo during the reign of al-'Adid (1160-1171). Al-Buni twice went on pilgrimage to the holy cities of Arabia and visited Damascus and Baghdad. In Damascus he met Ibn 'Asakir and when confronted by him with a question about the anticipated demise of the Fatimids, al-Buni replied that the demise of both the Fatimids and Abbasids was certain. But al-Buni was particularly pessimistic about the fate of Egypt, only at the end of time and with the appearance of the Mahdi would the situation in Egypt improve. He was more optimistic about the prospects of Syria and Iraq following the fall of the Abbasids.²⁹

This reveals no particular hostility toward the Fatimids, rather one gets the strong feeling of general disillusionment with rulers present and future. Al-Buni's pessimistic attitude toward rulership can be explained as arising from deeply rooted Islamic values. Islam is a religion orientated towards the past with a cyclical view of history. On this view, little good is to be expected from the present times and rulers and even less from the future. But al-Buni also

²⁸ S. M. Stern, "Cairo as the Centre of the Isma'ili Movement", reprinted in his *Studies in Early Ismailism*, (Jerusalem, 1983), 236. The same expression is used by Mouton (see, 373) for describing the position of Ismailism in Damascus during the Fatimid period. But in comparison to Egypt, the period of the Fatimid rule in Damascus was shorter and the Fatimid grip on the town much weaker.

²⁹ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 750-3, esp., 752-3.

drew on his personal experience of Muslim North Africa and the Middle East. He enjoyed the advantage of a comparative view of regimes and politics, and to him the differences between Fatimid Egypt and the rest of the Sunni world seemed very unclear if not altogether indistinct. The progressive de-Islamization of the Fatimid state during the twelfth century is undoubtedly behind al-Buni's outlook.

The fact that a Maliki jurist from Tunisia settled in Alexandria is very telling in itself and exemplifies a more general trend. The influence of Sunni Islam, in its Maliki form, was especially strong in Alexandria. In the first half of the twelfth century, the religious and educational life of the town was dominated by the activities of two outstanding scholars, al-Turtushi and al-Silafi. In 516/1122-1123, Turtushi submitted to the vizier al-Ma'mun al-Bata'ihi a request to cease the implementation of Fatimid law in cases of inheritance. Turtushi's demand reflected the growing self-confidence of Sunni jurists in their dealings with the state. For example, a Maliki jurist whom the Fatimid Imam al-Hafiz (1130-1149) wished to appoint as a *cadi* stipulated that he would judge only according to the precepts of his legal school. His request was denied and the nomination cancelled. Nonetheless, his stand was in sharp contrast to that of Sunni jurists of the second half of the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh, who when appointed to the post of *cadi* agreed to enforce the Fatimid law of inheritance.³⁰ The confident and assertive stance of Sunni men of religion vis-à-vis the state would not have been possible without the co-operation of the viziers. Beginning with Badr al-Jamali none of the Fatimid viziers of the twelfth century was an Isma'ili. In contrast to the civilian viziers of the eleventh century, the viziers of the twelfth century were military men who had risen through the ranks and had an independent military power base. Thus they were able to conduct independent religious policies which were at odds with the Isma'ili persuasions of the Fatimid rulers. In 525/1130-1131, for a short period of time, four chief *cadis* representing the Shafi'i, Maliki, Imami and Isma'ili (Fatimid) schools of laws were appointed by the military vizier Kutayfat. Each of these *cadis* was empowered to judge inheritance cases according to his own school.³¹ The pro-

³⁰ *Ibid*, I, 510-1.

³¹ *Ibid*, VI, 146-7.

cess of undermining Ismailism was especially advanced in Alexandria where Sunni law colleges were set up. The impact of the cultural and educational trends typical of the Eastern parts of the Muslim world was strongly felt in the town. Turtushi was familiar with Nizam al-Mulk's policies and in Alexandria he founded a teaching institution modelled on the Iraqi colleges of law.³² Cadis of the Banu Hadid family, who ruled Alexandria *de facto* followed Turtushi's steps. Although their relations with Turtushi were fairly problematic, he set a trend and his example was compelling. The law colleges established by the Banu Hadid continued to function well into the Ayyubid period.³³

Turtushi died in 520/1126. Shortly before that, a Shafi'i jurist from Isfahan, al-Silafi, had settled in Alexandria (511/1117-1118). Al-Silafi was born in 475/1082-1083 and during the period of his studies he travelled extensively in the Middle East in search of famous teachers. His choice of Alexandria as the place for his permanent residence was a consequence of his marriage to a wealthy woman. Al-Silafi became a towering figure in the educational life of Alexandria and a multitude of students and men of religion spent time studying under him. The vizier Ibn Salar established a law college for al-Silafi and provided it with a pious endowment.³⁴

Turtushi and al-Silafi represent foreign religious groups who settled and flourished in Alexandria in the twelfth century. But the town had also an indigenous class of scholars of whom the most prominent was Ibn 'Awf al-Zuhri (1093-1185). In 532/1137-1138, the vizier Ridwan built for Ibn 'Awf a law college. The document concerning the establishment of this *madrasa* has survived. Ridwan himself was a typical Fatimid military vizier of the twelfth century. The beginnings of his career were as a provincial military governor and he rose to power by leading a quasi-popular uprising against the Armenian Christian vizier, Bahram. Ridwan himself was a Sunni Muslim and his brother a Shi'ite of the Imami branch. Once in power, Ridwan attempted to undermine the rule

³² G. L. Leiser, *The Restoration of Sunnism in Egypt*, Ph. d. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1976), I, 115-6, 123-5.

³³ For the cadi al-Makin Abu Talib ibn Hadid (462-528/1070-1134), see Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 505-7. For the *madrasa* of Banu Hadid, see *Muqaffa*, VII, 25; Leiser, *The Restoration*, I, 119-21.

³⁴ According to the contemporary Ibn 'Asakir, al-Silafi stayed at Damascus in 509/1115-1116 studying *hadith*. See, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, (ed) 'Amrawi, V, 208-9. Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, I, 706-11, esp., 708; Leiser, *The Restoration*, I, 151.

of al-Hafiz. The document concerning the establishment of the law college in Alexandria by Ridwan is very interesting. The act of setting up this institution was initiated by the vizier but attributed to the Imam whose name the law college carried—*madrasa al-Hafiziyya*. The Fatimid Chancery which was responsible for drafting the document maintained the pretence that the Imam ran the state. The local authorities in Alexandria were requested to support the law college which reveals the fact that the city was barely under the control of the central government. The founding of the *madrasa* must have been problematic. The vizier was eager to set it up, but was unable, or unwilling, to provide it with a pious endowment. The document reflects this dilemma by a strange phrase stating that the vizier had expressed his strong wish that the Imam would finance and supply the law college with grain from his own resources (literally from his *diwan*). The jurist appointed to teach in this law college was of course Ibn 'Awf on whom extravagant praise was lavished.³⁵ The establishment of this college must be seen against a dual background: the Sunni character of Alexandria and the ability of the vizier to compel the Imam to do something which was against his own best interests.

II. In contrast to Alexandria, law colleges did not exist in Fustat-Cairo until the time of Saladin. The mosque was the most important religious institution in the capital for the whole of the Fatimid period. Mosques proliferated throughout the capital and its environs, the area of the cemeteries, Jabal Muqattam and the desert. In 403/1012-1013, there were in the capital 830 mosques which had no permanent sources of revenue. Al-Hakim (996-1021) allocated for their upkeep and running 9,220 *dirhams* per month.³⁶ However, the urban scene and the religious life of the capital were dominated by the large and richly endowed congregational mosques built by the Fatimid rulers and their viziers. The building of congregational mosques symbolized sovereignty and it was the exclusive privilege of rulers.³⁷ The first mosque built in Cairo was the

³⁵ The text of the document appears in Qalqashandi (X, 458-9), and English translation is provided by Leiser. See, *The Restoration*, II, 435-8.

³⁶ Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, II, 96; *Khitat*, IV, 84.

³⁷ The only known exception is the congregational mosque built on the Jazira island by Ghayn, an eunuch of al-Hakim, who for a short period of time wielded great power in the state. Later he was subject to al-Hakim's cruel punishment

Azhar (built between April 970 and June 972). It was an Isma'ili mosque and an educational institution in which courses of Isma'ili teaching took place. In its early history Azhar was also a focal point for the activity of a group of jurists supported by al-'Aziz and his vizier Ya'qub ibn Killis.³⁸ Al-Hakim built three congregational mosques in the environs of Fustat-Cairo; in Maqs, in Rashida and outside the Zuwayla Gate of Cairo (this mosque was known as the Nur mosque and later as the mosque of al-Hakim). But the most significant deed of al-Hakim was the establishment of pious endowments in support of the Azhar, the three mosques built by him and Dar al-'Ilm, and the institution of Isma'ili teaching that he founded in Cairo. Its pious endowment included urban estates and commercial buildings owned by al-Hakim in Fustat. The income of the Azhar alone amounted to 1,067 *dinars* per year.³⁹ Later two other mosques were built in Cairo: the first by the Fatimid Imam al-Amir (1101-1130) and his vizier—the Aqmar mosque in 519/1125—and by al-Zafir in 543/1148-1149. Both mosques were supported by pious endowments made up of urban properties and al-Zafir's mosque served also as a place for the teaching of law and a group of reciters of the Koran was attached to it.⁴⁰ Other congregational mosques were built by Fatimid viziers. Al-Afdal, during the rule of his father (Sha'ban 478/November-October 1085) built a congregational mosque outside Cairo on a high ground overlooking the Lake of the Abyssinians. It was not an expensive project, the construction costs ran to 6,000 *dinars*, a very modest sum for such an enterprise.⁴¹

The vizier Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik established two congregational mosques. One of them was outside the Zuwayla Gate and originally was designated to serve as the burial place for a holy relic—the head of Husayn—which was kept in a *mashhad* (martyrium)

and died from wounds inflicted on him. See, Ibn Duqmaq, IV, 115; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 87-8.

³⁸ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 226 (quoting Musabbihi, an early eleventh-century chronicler).

³⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 49, 50.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, IV, 75-6, 80-1. For the Aqmar mosque see, C. Williams, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo. Part I: the Mosque of al-Aqmar", *Muqarnas*, 1 (1983), 37-52.

⁴¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 74-5. Maqrizi's dates in this account are problematical. In 478/1085, Afdal was not in power yet, and the sum of 6,000 *dinars* seems too low for the building of a congregational mosque.

at Ascalon. The fear that the town might fall to the Crusaders caused the vizier to build this mosque with the intention of transferring the head to it. However, the Fatimids insisted that Husayn's head must be kept in the palace and a special *mashhad* was built for that purpose. Another mosque built by the vizier was in Cairo and served as a commemorative monument for the Fatimid Imam al-Zafir killed in a palace intrigue in 1154.⁴² The building of mosques which served as shrines pre-dates the Fatimid period in Egypt. For instance, Tibr, an emir of the Ikhshidid period, built a mosque in which was buried the head of a Shi'ite rebel against the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur. The Fatimid ruler al-Zahir (1021-1036) frequently used to visit it but the reasons for his interest in the mosque remain vague.⁴³

The cult of shrines and tombs in the great southern cemetery, Qarafa al-Kubra, had a long tradition in the pre-Fatimid and Fatimid periods. The area saw intense building activity during the Fatimid period. The first member of the Fatimid royal family to build there was al-'Aziz's mother, al-Sayyida al-Mu'izziyya. In Ramadan 366/April-May 977, she built the congregational mosque of the Qarafa which included also an orchard and cistern. Her other projects involved *qasr* (its meaning is vague; house, or residence), a bath-house, an orchard and a well.⁴⁴ The *qasr* existed until 567/1171-1172. In 520/1126-1127, al-Amir built on top of the *qasr* a pavilion from which he used to watch the dancing of the Sufis of whom he was patron. Female patronage of mosques and other structures in the Qarafa was very common during the Fatimid period. In 522/1128, the wife of al-Amir built on the outskirts of the Qarafa al-Kubra a mosque overlooking the Lake of the Abyssinians. It seems that the same woman, who was renowned for her piety and charity, built in 526/1131-1132 a mosque and a *ribat* for aged widows in the Qarafa.⁴⁵ Her *ribat* was not an unique institution. For ex-

⁴² Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 81, 265-6.

⁴³ *Ibid*, IV, 271, (quoting al-Quda'i, an eleventh-century chronicler and antiquary); Lev, *State*, 250.

⁴⁴ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 120 (quoting al-Quda'i), 333, 342. Maqrizi attributes the water reservoir (*hawd*) to Sitt al-Mulk, al-Mu'izz's daughter and al-Hakim's sister. The construction work on the mosque and the *qasr* was carried out by the same person: the market inspector, al-Hasan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Farsi. For a wider discussion of this topic, see J. M. Bloom, "The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo", *Muqarnas*, 4(1987), 7-20.

⁴⁵ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 322-3. For al-Amir and the Sufis, see Fernandes, 21.

ample, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Madhara'i, a high-ranking administrator of the Ikhshidid period, set up a *ribat* for *ashraf* women (i.e. the female descendants of Hasan and Husayn, the two sons of 'Ali and Fatima). Women of the households of Fatimid viziers and Imams were frequent patrons of religious buildings in the Qarafa. In the 1020's, a slave-girl of 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Jarjara'i founded a *ribat*, which was supported by a pious endowment.⁴⁶ In 536/1141-1142, Sitt al-Ghazala, who was in charge of al-Hafiz's inkwell and responsible for the upkeep and cleaning of pens, built a mosque in the Qarafa which came to be known by her name.⁴⁷ Another female servant of al-Hafiz, his *waqqafa*, whose duty was to stand in front of her master, established a mosque, too. It had an enclosure (*hawsh*) which included several rooms (*buyut*) for women who lived in seclusion.⁴⁸ Other mosques in the area were founded by al-Afdal's servant (*farrash*) and two eunuchs of al-Hafiz. One of them was Shaiq al-Mulk, the director of the treasury and the other, 'Azim al-Dawla, was the bearer of the parasol and the veil behind which the Fatimid Imam used to speak to the people.⁴⁹

The Qarafa was an important focal point of religious life and social activity and a population of permanent inhabitants—the Qara-fiyya—lived there. The patronage of women of the royal family, viziers and slaves and servants in the households of the Fatimid rulers exemplifies the links that the Fatimid regime fostered with the people living in the cemeteries.⁵⁰ For example, the water reservoir built in 366/976-977 by al-Sayyida al-Mu'izziyya, was renovated in 546/1151-1152 and in 580/1184-1185. In both cases the work was carried out on the orders of high-ranking patrons; a Fatimid vizier and a top Ayyubid administrator. The involvement of the regime in the social and religious life in the Qarafa was manifold: it regulated the rites that took place in the Qarafa,

⁴⁶ Who the beneficiaries of this *ribat* were is not entirely clear. See, Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 333-4. Ahmad al-Jarjara'i was the brother of the vizier Abu 'l-Qasim al-Jarjara'i.

⁴⁷ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 326. The inkwell was one of the Imam's insignia of rule. See, Sanders, index.

⁴⁸ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 326.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, IV, 321, 327, 328. For these courtiers and their roles in the court life and ceremonies, see Sanders, index, under *sahib bayt al-mal*, *sahib al-mizalla* and *sahib al-sitr*.

⁵⁰ For the mosques of al-Afdal, Tala'i' ibn Ruzzik and the wife of the vizier Ibn Salar, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 324.

maintained water supplies and organized the distribution of alms to people living there. Shaiq al-Mulk, for instance, kept a register (*ruznamaj*) with the names those who lived in the mosques of the Qarafa and were entitled to support. On the nights of lights (*layali 'l-wuqud* i.e. the first and the middle days of the months of Rajab and Sha'ban), he sent food to people in the mosques and to those living in seclusion at the *buyut* in the Qarafa. In addition he used to send to these people fruit from the orchard that was part of his mosque. Shaiq al-Mulk must have been a person of high standing with al-Hafiz. In his mosque he gave a reception for his ruler attended by the eunuchs of the court, dignitaries and emirs. The nights of the lights were popular festivals which attracted many people to the Qarafa. One of the places where crowds and Koran reciters gathered was the pavilion (*jawsaq*) built on the model of the Kaaba by Abu Bakr ibn 'Ali al-Madhara'i.⁵¹

b. *The Restoration of Sunni Islam*

I. Saladin and the other Ayyubid rulers of Egypt did not compete with their Fatimid predecessors by founding mosques but instead they established law colleges. The foundation of law colleges in Fustat by Saladin was a carefully calculated act undertaken from a position of strength. Saladin's deeds reveal a conscious attempt to maximize the public impact of his new policy. On the first day of the Muslim year 566/14 September 1170, a prison just south of the Ancient Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As, the religious and commercial heart of Fustat, was demolished and converted into a law college. The building that represented the coercive power of the Fatimid regime, formally still in power, was turned into a institution identified with Sunni Islam. The symbolic value of this act was noted by Ibn al-Athir, even though he was distance to the event in both time and place.⁵² This college became to be known as the *madrasa* al-Nasiriyya, deriving its name from Saladin's epithet al-Malik al-Nasir, the Victorious King, and served the jurists of the Shafi'i legal school. However, the inauguration of teaching in it took place much later. Two weeks later, on another side of the complex of the Ancient Mosque, work began on a second law

⁵¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 332-3.

⁵² Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, XI, 240.

college. Saladin demolished a commercial building, a covered market which had been used for the sale of linen, Qaysariyya al-Ghazl, to make room for the building of a law college dedicated for the jurists of the Maliki legal school. Both institutions were supported by generous pious endowments. The first to emulate Saladin's deeds was his nephew, Taqi al-Din. He established, half a year later, a law college for Shafi'i jurists within the palace of Manazil al-'Izz. Like Saladin's colleges in Fustat it was provided with a rich pious endowment.⁵³ Another institution established by Saladin in 569/1173-1174 in Cairo was a Sufi *khanqa*. It was designated for foreign Sufis whose arrival in Egypt the regime encouraged. It was a large institution which provided the Sufis with accommodation and material support.⁵⁴

In 572/1176-1177, upon his return to Egypt from Syria, Saladin founded his third law college. This one was adjacent to the mausoleum of Shafi'i and became to be known as *madrasa* al-Nasiriyya at the Qarafa cemetery. As is attested by the founding inscription the establishment of this institution was the initiative of al-Khabushani. In the light of his special relations with Saladin, the positive response of the Sultan to al-Khabushani's requests is not surprising. Moreover, al-Shafi'i's tomb was a much visited site and the new institution enjoyed wide public exposure.⁵⁵ Later, Sultan al-Kamil extended a small mosque in the vicinity of Shafi'i's tomb to become a large congregational mosque. The need for a bigger mosque was due to the great crowds which used to visit the place and the existence of Saladin's law college and its student population.⁵⁶

The association between Saladin and al-Khabushani was far from being unusual or unique. Such relations between rulers and holy persons are well attested in the Fatimid and Mamluk periods. One of the best known cases is the companionship between Shaykh Khadir ibn Abi Bakr al-Mihrani and the Mamluk Sultan Baybars. However, due to al-Mihrani's highly idiosyncratic character and behavior he became a liability to the sultan. A more typical case is the patronage extended by the vizier al-Afdal to Shaykh Ibn Sa'd al-Atfihi. In the period that al-Afdal fought against al-Mustansir's

⁵³ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 193-4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, IV, 273: cf. Fernandes, 22-5.

⁵⁵ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 251; Leiser, *The Restoration*, I, 225-31.

⁵⁶ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 86.

eldest son, al-Nizar, and his allies in Alexandria (end of 1095—beginning of 1096), his mother used to go on Fridays incognito among the people in the markets, congregational mosques and *ribats*. She learnt what people were saying about al-Afdal and heard their opinions on current events. In one of her tours she visited al-Atfihi, who was a transmitter of the Prophetic traditions and an ascetic, at his mosque. He promised her victory to the Sultan and the safe-being of her son, who as she told him was fighting with the army against the rebels in Alexandria. Following al-Afdal's triumph she told him about those who spoke evil of him and recommended him to befriend al-Atfihi. Al-Afdal carried out savage acts of retribution against his enemies, but took al-Atfihi under his patronage. Al-Afdal's patronage evolved into veneration and respect for al-Atfihi with whom he spent many hours conversing about the Prophetic traditions and history. Al-Atfihi's mosque became crowded with people who realized that when al-Afdal was in the company of the Shaykh he was more attentive to their needs and problems. The relationship between the two was mutually beneficial. Al-Afdal's attitude was a mixture of personal admiration for al-Atfihi and political considerations. Al-Atfihi was instrumental to al-Afdal for keeping in touch with the common people and gaining their support. At the same time al-Atfihi's prestige among the people was much enhanced. Also in other ways he gained immensely from al-Afdal's patronage. Al-Afdal secured a steady water supply for the mosque, planted an orchard, built a bathhouse and for himself he constructed a loggia and *qa'a*. In addition, he built for al-Atfihi an open prayer area where the Shaykh conducted prayers over the dead brought for burial in the Qarafa.⁵⁷

Saladin's policy of setting up law colleges was emulated by his successors and the military and civilian elite of the Ayyubid period. Two religious institutions established by other Ayyubid rulers of Egypt exemplify Saladin's influence in choosing central locations and the continued use of former Fatimid buildings. The Dar al-Hadith established by the Sultan al-Kamil was located in the most central site in Cairo, the street that runs between the two Fatimid palaces—the Western and Eastern.⁵⁸ In 1242, a section of the Eastern palace was demolished by the Sultan Salih Ayyub

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, IV, 329-30.

⁵⁸ Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 361-75.

to make a space for a new law college. The construction work was carried out at great speed and, in a less than a year, this college—the Salihyya *madrasa*—was completed. Apparently the materials of the demolished palace were re-used which might explain the rapid progress of the work. Also an old gate of the palace was incorporated into the new building serving as its entrance.⁵⁹

Many law colleges in the capital were built by Ayyubid emirs. This trend began as early as 570/1174-1175, and continued during the whole period of Ayyubid rule in Egypt. Two emirs in Saladin's service were among the founders of law colleges. One of them was Sayf al-Din Yazkuj, originally a military slave of Shirkuh who became an emir in the Asadiyya regiment. In view of the role played by the Asadiyya in Saladin's nomination as Fatimid vizier, it is not surprising to find officers of this regiment in eminent positions during Saladin's rule. Yazkuj set up two colleges, one in Fustat and one in Cairo.⁶⁰ Also his wife, herself the daughter of another Asadi emir, founded a law college. For that purpose she bought a building from a Jewish physician who served as secretary to Baha' al-Din Qaraqush.⁶¹ Another college was set up according to the will of the emir Masrur, a former Fatimid eunuch, who became the commander of Saladin's body guard. He kept his assignment until the reign of Sultan al-Kamil when he retired from service. In his lifetime Masrur became renowned for his righteousness and charity. Upon his death, having no family and heirs, he disposed all of his property. In his will Masrur ordered the building of a law college, which was financed through the sale of rural property in Syria. The college itself was supported by a pious endowment which included a small *funduq*. Masrur was buried in the Qarafa next to a mosque he had established there.⁶²

Masrur represents a type of religiosity characteristic of the eunuchs as well as of free-born people of the military class. Saladin's distinguished commander of the navy, Husam al-Din Lu'lu', was an Armenian and a former Fatimid officer. He died in Jumada II

⁵⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 209; Qalqashandi, III, 352; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 352-61.

⁶⁰ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 194, 199; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 327.

⁶¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 200; cf. Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 330-1. For a *madrasa* of a Kurdish emir of Saladin known as Qutibiyya, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 196; cf. Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 298-9.

⁶² Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 216.

596/June-July 1200 and was buried in a mausoleum (*turba*) he had built for himself in the Qarafa. He too was known for his liberal charity and piety.⁶³ The same mixture of military career, piety, charity and concern for personal salvation is reflected in the biography of Sultan al-Kamil's emir, Fakhr al-Din ibn Qizil al-Barumi (born in Aleppo in 1166 and died in Harran in 1232). During al-Kamil's reign he became one of the most powerful persons in the state and is described as distributing bounteous charity including among those living in seclusion (*arbab al-buyut*). In Cairo, he built a complex composed of a law college and a mosque and another one in the Qarafa, which included a *ribat* and an elementary school for orphans (*kuttab sabil*). His building activities extended also to Mecca, there he set up a *ribat*.⁶⁴

In 580/1184-1185, a splendid law college was established by Qadi al-Fadil in Cairo. It also included a hall (*qa'a*) for the study of the seven different ways of reciting the Koran, and an elementary school for orphans. Qadi al-Fadil's private residence was within this complex. The fame of this college, the Fadiliyya *madrasa*, was derived from its large and diverse library donated by Qadi al-Fadil, who was a renowned bibliophile. He used to buy books on a wide range of topics and his library also included rare items. Ibn al-Qifti says that he had used this library and its catalogue. Members of Qadi al-Fadil's family were connected with this institution. Qadi al-Fadil's son, Ahmad, taught in it and his grandson served as its librarian.⁶⁵ Other administrators of the Ayyubid age were also involved in setting up law colleges.⁶⁶

A law college established in Fustat in 570/1174-1175, and known as the Arsufi *madrasa*, epitomizes the foundations set up by private people from outside the ruling establishment. Arsufi was a merchant from Palestine who used his private wealth to establish a well-endowed law college.⁶⁷ A most interesting institution is the

⁶³ See, ch.4, n.89.

⁶⁴ Maqrizi, IV, 199; cf: Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 349-52. For other law colleges built by Ayyubid emirs, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 208, 216, 2325; cf: Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 311-3, 313-4, 332-3.

⁶⁵ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 197-9; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 334-47; Ibn al-Qifti, III, 187; Safadi, VII, 57, XVIII, 198. For a school established by Saladin to teach orphans and poor children the Koran, see MacKenzie, 129.

⁶⁶ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 205; Ibn Duqmaq, IV, 92; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 286-9, 317-27.

⁶⁷ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 194; Ibn Duqmaq, IV, 98; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 281-2.

law college established in Fustat, in 640/1242-1243, by West African pilgrims. It was a Maliki institution which became famous in West Africa, and was maintained by cash donations brought by West African pilgrims who passed through Egypt on pilgrimage to the Holy Cities of Arabia.⁶⁸

As a result of the establishment of new religious institutions in Fustat-Cairo, many urban properties in the capital and even some agricultural lands were tied up in pious endowments set up for the maintenance of these institutions. For instance, the pious endowment of al-Nasiriyya college founded by Saladin in Fustat included the following properties: a goldsmiths market in Fustat and a village. An inscription read by Maqrizi stated that the building housing the goldsmiths market was constructed by al-'Aziz. It was one of many buildings built for commercial uses in the capital by members of the Fatimid royal family.⁶⁹ Other colleges founded by Saladin; the Qamhiyya *madrasa* and the Nasiriyya *madrasa* in the Qarafa, were provided with the same combination of urban and rural properties. The pious endowment of the Qamhiyya *madrasa* included a covered market for the sale of paper, Qaysariyya al-Warraqin, in Fustat and a rural estate in Fayyum. The Nasiriyya *madrasa* in the Qarafa was endowed with properties adjacent to it such as an oven, bathhouse and shops as well as with the Island of Elephants which was situated at some distance from Cairo.⁷⁰ Another law college established by Saladin, the Suyufiyya *madrasa*, is notable for the absence of rural properties in the pious endowment set up for its upkeep. But extensive properties in Cairo were endowed in its favor. These included 32 shops in the area of the Little Market of Amir al-Juyush (a market established by the vizier Badr al-Jamali), the Futuh Gate of Cairo and the Barjawan quarter, one of the ancient parts of the town dating from the second half of the tenth century.⁷¹ But it seems that the Sufi *khanqa* established by Saladin in Cairo enjoyed the richest pious endowment; it was composed mostly of rural properties which included

⁶⁸ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 195; Ibn Duqmaq, IV, 96; Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 290-1. For the diversified relations between Egypt and West Africa, see N. Levtzion, "Mamluk Egypt and Takrur (West Africa)", in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, in Honour of Professor David Ayalon, (ed) M. Sharon, (Jerusalem, Leiden, 1986), 183-209.

⁶⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 193.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, IV, 193-4, 251.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, IV, 196.

a commercial garden outside Cairo, extensive rural lands in the provinces and a covered market for the sell of beverages and potions, Qaysariyya al-Sharab, in Cairo.⁷² Among the other law colleges, Taqi al-Din's *madrasa* of Manazil al-ʿIzz, was especially richly endowed with urban properties; a bathhouse, *funduq* for the storage and trade of palm dates, and the Jazira island on its agricultural lands.⁷³ Also the institutions set up by other Ayyubid rulers were supported by pious endowments no less extensive than those created by Saladin and Taqi al-Din. For example, the daughter of the Sultan al-ʿAdil, ʿIsmat al-Din Mu'nisa, founded an endowed law college but no details about the type of properties are available.⁷⁴ The Sultan al-Salih Ayyub developed an urban estate (*hukr*) from which subsequently land tax (*hikr*) was collected and endowed it for his Salihyya law college. Earlier, similar method was adopted by the Sultan al-Kamil. He converted a section of the Fatimid palace-complex into a residential block (*rabʿ*) and endowed it (i.e. the incomes from it) in favor of the Dar al-Hadith he had founded.⁷⁵ Taqi al-Din's building activities were not restricted to the capital alone, but also included the foundation of two endowed law colleges in the Fayyum. However, with the exception of the Fayyum, there is little evidence in the Ayyubid period for the setting up of law colleges outside the capital and the institutions founded were not established by the Ayyubid rulers.⁷⁶

II. There are two basic approaches for interpreting the meaning and the significance of the law colleges established by Saladin and the other Ayyubid rulers. George Makdisi strongly disputes the views of M. von Berchem and I. Goldziher who both regard the law colleges established in the Muslim world during the second half of the eleventh century as institutions supported by the state and, in the eyes of Goldziher, responsible also for the dissemination of the Ashʿari theological doctrine. Makdisi maintains that the *madrasa* "remained essentially a privately endowed institution destined for public, but according to the wishes of the individual

⁷² *Ibid.*, IV, 273-4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, IV, 194.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 200; cf. Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 347-9.

⁷⁵ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 209, 211.

⁷⁶ Leiser, *The Restoration*, II, 376-96; S. Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam*, (Leiden, 1997), 75-6.

founder who established the institution and who formulated its public character". He argues that: "the status of the founder did not in any way alter the legal status of the institution he founded: the institution remained a *waqf*, a charitable trust".⁷⁷ As has been pointed out by A. L. Tibawi, Makdisi's claim that the status of the founder, be he a ruler or a private person, does not matter is difficult to accept.⁷⁸ Ibn 'Asakir's biography of Nur al-Din as well as the writings of Saladin's historian-admirers clearly show that, in the period under discussion, the demarcation line between private and official aspects of the behavior of the ruler was tenuous at best if not blurred altogether. Moreover, Saladin, and members of his family which founded law colleges did so by exercising executive power. They acted as rulers using for that purpose the properties of the former Fatimid state which they came to control by the virtue of their military triumph. We must regard the establishment of law colleges by Saladin as the embodiment of a coherent state religious policy.

The drift of this policy was well understood by late medieval historians. Maqrizi, in his evaluation of it, says that Saladin's chief *cadi* was a Shafi'i jurist, the Kurd Ibn Dirbas, who appointed as his deputies only Shafi'i jurists. Maqrizi is also very explicit as to the theological teachings supported by Saladin and his regime: it was the Ash'ari doctrine. Saladin imposed the Ash'ari doctrine and this was stipulated in the *waqf* documents of the institutions founded by him such as the law colleges and the Sufi *khanqa*.⁷⁹ The preference accorded to Shafi'is did not mean the exclusion of other legal schools. Law colleges were not built for the Shafi'is exclusively. During Saladin's rule and the Ayyubid period in general, law colleges were built also for the Malikis, Hanafis and even Hanbalis. On the other hand, the support of Asharism was a clear state policy. *Cadi* Ibn Dirbas, in conjunction with Saladin, ordered the muezzins to announce the Ash'ari doctrine, known as the '*aqida murshida*, during their night call to prayer. State support for certain legal schools and theological teaching was not Saladin's innovation. Maqrizi contrasts Saladin's support for the Shafi'is with

⁷⁷ See, his *The Rise of Colleges. Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh, 1981), 300, 302.

⁷⁸ See, his "Origin and Character of al-Madrasah", *BSOAS*, XXV(1962), 231-2, 234. See also, Chamberlain, 51-2.

⁷⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 161.

Nur al-Din's backing of the Hanafis.⁸⁰ Maqrizi's reference to Nur al-Din is a very apt one; it puts Saladin's religious policies in their proper context.⁸¹ The establishment of law colleges in Aleppo was part of Nur al-Din's struggle against Shi'ite Islam in the town. Nur al-Din changed the Shi'ite formula of call to prayer in Aleppo to the Sunni one and he supported the introduction of Sunni legal schools. He withdrew support from the Shi'ites and founded law colleges sustained by pious endowments. For Saladin's religious policies in Aleppo we have the contemporary authoritative account of 'Imad al-Din himself. When Saladin wrested Aleppo from the Zengids and annexed it to his territories he gave preference to the Shafi'i school by appointing cadis and preachers from among its members. Although Saladin's preferences were clearly set out it did not mean that a battle was waged against the Hanafis. At least some leading Hanafi scholars were approved by the new regime and maintained their positions.⁸² The religious policies of Nur al-Din and Saladin followed a similar pattern: the legal school of their choice was given an eminent position in the state but the regime was not overtly hostile to the other schools, which were tolerated and occasionally even supported.

c. *Taxation and Religion*

I. Saladin's religious policy can be characterized as Sunni, conservative and pietistic. Pietism and the influence of Nur al-Din are very evident when Saladin's fiscal policy is examined. A much publicized aspect of it was the abolition of taxes that were levied on the urban economy of Fustat-Cairo and were unauthorized by Islamic law. These taxes were known as *mukus* or *hilali* and included sales and property taxes.⁸³ Other taxes, known under the name of *baratil*, were collected by state functionaries such as market supervisors, cadis and governors (*wula al-balad*) in the rural areas.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, IV, 48-9, 161.

⁸¹ The influence of Nur al-Din's religious policies on Saladin has been noted by modern scholarship, too. See, Lapidus, 280, 284-5. For the Ayyubid support of Asharism, see Madelung, 110, n.3, 158, 159-60.

⁸² Ibn 'Asakir, (ed) Elisséeff, 137, para.,4, MS, XVI, 293, ll, 29-30; 'Imad al-Din, *Barq*, V, 127, 129-30. For Hanafis dismissed by Saladin, see Morray, 40-1, 123.

⁸³ Rabie, 105-6.

⁸⁴ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 179.

Both kinds of taxes, *mukus* and *baratil*, were collected during the Fatimid period. In 1171, after the death of al-ʿAdid, Saladin ordered the abolition of *mukus* taxes in the capital and he regulated the collection and payment of *zakat*, the alms-tax. The decree (*manshur*) announcing the abolition of the *mukus* states that Saladin as the official responsible for the affairs of the people manifests his good will towards the inhabitants of the capital and the merchants trading there by abolishing the custom duties levied at two ports which served the city. Custom duties levied on merchants arriving in and departing from these two ports amounted to 100,000 gold coins (*min al-ʿayn*) a year. The decree says that the Sultan was ready to renounce (the riches of) this world for the sake of the hereafter. The *mukus* levied in two provinces were abolished, too. In all, Saladin discontinued the collection of illegal taxes to the amount of one million *dinars* per year and two millions *irdabs* of grain in kind.⁸⁵

Very little is known about the collection and distribution of the alms-tax in the Fatimid period. On 3 Rabiʿ I 567/4 November 1171, Saladin ordered the distribution of money from the alms-tax to those who were entitled to receive it: the poor and the needy, travellers and insolvent debtors. It was said that the alms-tax was collected for those who fought the Holy War and for the freeing of slaves. Maqrizi specifies how the levying of the alms-tax was carried out. It was collected on merchandise, livestock, palm dates and vegetables.⁸⁶

In the same year, Saladin tried to persuade the emir of Mecca to cease the collection of *mukus* from pilgrims arriving to Arabia by offering him compensation in the form of rural estates (*diyaʿ*).⁸⁷ Apparently, similar efforts were undertaken by Saladin in 572/1176-1177, with the aim of obtaining exemption for pilgrims from paying *mukus*. ʿImad al-Din says that on Saladin's intervention the *mukus* levied on pilgrims in Mecca were abolished and Saladin promised to supply each year 8,000 *irdabs* of hard grain (*hintā*) to the Holy Cities through the port of Jedda. To finance this expen-

⁸⁵ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 443 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy), 522-3, (where the full text of the document is given); *Uyun*, I, 321.

⁸⁶ *Suluk*, 65. Maqrizi's description of the collection of *zakat* tallies with that of Makhzumi. See, Khan, *Arab Legal*, 285; Rabie, 95-100.

⁸⁷ Abu Shama, *Uyun*, I, 321-2 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy).

diture, Saladin set up a special pious endowment.⁸⁸ Maqrizi adds some further details. The tax that had been levied on the pilgrims amounted to 7.5 Egyptian *dinars* and was collected either in 'Aydhab, the Egyptian port on the Red Sea, or in Jedda. This accounts implies that the revenues from taxing the pilgrims were shared between the rulers of Egypt and Arabia. How such an arrangement could work in practice is unclear. In any case, Maqrizi, in line with earlier historians, says that the emir of Mecca had to be compensated for his loss of revenue by shipments of grain and allocation of *iqta's* in Yemen and Upper Egypt.⁸⁹ Saladin backed up his policies aimed at abolishing the taxes levied on pilgrims by institutional arrangements which reflect his seriousness and long-term commitment. Nonetheless, it was difficult to stamp out the practice of collecting illegal taxes from pilgrims. In 577/1181-1182, Saladin had to remain the governor of Qus, in Upper Egypt, to end the collection of unauthorized taxes from merchants arriving from the Yemen and pilgrims from Arabia.⁹⁰ It seems that the administrative office responsible for collecting the alms-tax (*diwan al-zakat*) was a powerful body. Its officials compelled Saladin's brother, Tughtakin, who came from the Yemen during the reign of al-'Aziz 'Uthman (i.e. sometime between 1193 and 1199), to pay alms-tax on the goods he brought with him. Although derived from a late source, this is very interesting information open to several interpretations. It can be seen as indicating that everyone, even the ruler of the Yemen and a member of the Ayyubid family, had to fulfill the religious duty of paying *zakat*. Another way of looking at this account is to see it as a reflection of the strained relations within the Ayyubid family and the officials of the *diwan* as acting on the behest of their political master, al-'Aziz 'Uthman, Saladin's son.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Al-Bundari, 303-4; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 693 (quoting 'Imad al-Din); 'Uyun, II, 31-2.

⁸⁹ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 86. The concern and involvement of both Nur al-Din and Saladin in the affairs of the Holy Cities of Arabia might explain the attempts of historians of the Mamluk period to trace the establishment of the eunuch guardians at the Prophet tomb in Madina to one of them. For this issue and its wider context, see S. Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society*, (N. Y., 1995), esp., ch. 2.

⁹⁰ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 97.

⁹¹ Safadi, XVI, 450-1.

II. The sincerity of Saladin's attempt to adopt a tax-policy dictated by the precepts of religious law is beyond our ability to judge. In fact it is quite irrelevant. We should consider Saladin's policies in their own right and examine their aims and context. When taken on face value, Saladin's tax policy was highly problematic if not a priori doomed to failure. There is a basic tension between the restricted scope of taxation as authorized by the law and the needs of the state. This state of affairs is illustrated by a story narrated by Abu Shama on the authority of Ibn Shaddad, who in turn heard it directly from Saladin. Saladin said that Nur al-Din always consulted Shirkuh about his policies. Once he informed him of his intention to abolish unlawful taxes. However, Shirkuh pointed out that the army was paid from revenues derived from these taxes. It seems that the aim of this tale was apologetic; to demonstrate that the need to maximize the state's revenues always clashes with legal considerations. Furthermore, the hidden intention behind the whole account is to suggest that when the aim for which the taxes are collected is a just one there is no alternative but to continue levying unauthorized taxes.⁹² Such a conflict of interests is nicely exemplified by the decree of 567/1171-1172, prohibiting the sale of vine. However, it was not implemented in Alexandria where the sale of alcoholic beverages was widespread. Apparently, the implementation of this decree in Alexandria could have an adverse effect on the revenues that Saladin's father was deriving from the town. Only in 577/1181-1182, steps were taken to control the sale and consumption of alcohol in Alexandria. In that year, 120 shops in which beer was sold were destroyed in the town.⁹³ The improbable nature of a tax policy dictated by pietistic considerations is again demonstrated by a decree from 580/1184-1185 concerning taxation in Bahnasa. The collection of taxes unauthorized by the law (*hilali*) was permitted, but the farming out of taxes on the sale of beer, vine and taverns (*malahin*) was prohibited.⁹⁴ In this case, a distinction was drawn between taxes levied on alcohol expressly forbidden by law and other less outrageous forms of illegal taxation.

⁹² Saladin's statement that Nur al-Din always consulted Shirkuh is of course a tendentious saying aimed at portraying the Ayyubids as the rightful heirs of Nur al-Din. For the whole account, see Abu Shama, I, pt.1, 37.

⁹³ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 96; Rabie, 119.

⁹⁴ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 110.

d. *The Impact of Saladin's Policies*

On 9 Rajab 567/6 March 1172, the restoration of Sunni Islam in Egypt was publicly celebrated. On that day a black robe of honor sent by the Abbasid Caliph to Nur al-Din was delivered to Saladin. A day later, he wore it in ceremony attended by members of the religious establishment: the chief *cadi*, court witnesses, Koran reciters and preachers, and on 8 March Saladin clad in the black robe crossed Cairo in a procession.⁹⁵ Saladin's conduct set the norm for public behavior. The preachers who delivered the Friday sermons at the mosques began to wear black attire, and the public was reminded that attendance at Friday prayers was obligatory. The mosques in Fustat and Cairo were stripped of distinctive Fatimid decorations and signs such as the silver plates that were hung over the *mihrabs* and contained the names of the Fatimid rulers. These were very valuable and heavy artifacts made of pure silver.⁹⁶ It seems that Saladin adopted a carefully calculated policy toward the main mosques in the capital. In 568/1172-1173, in the course of renovation work at the Ancient Mosque in Fustat, Saladin's name was inscribed over the *mihrab*.⁹⁷ In that way, the religious and educational monuments at the heart of Fustat, which included two law colleges and the congregational mosque, became associated with the name of Saladin, the new ruler of the country, and Sunni Islam. On the other hand, the Friday prayers at the Azhar mosque in Cairo were abolished.⁹⁸ The mosque closely associated with Isma'ili Islam and the Fatimid rulers was rendered useless and lost its religious significance. More subtle was Saladin's policy towards Husayn's shrine in Cairo. Saladin established at the shrine a group of jurists who taught and studied Sunni law there.⁹⁹ What Saladin did was to associate Sunni Islam with a religious cult that had originally had a Shi'ite character and was introduced by the former Isma'ili rulers of the country.¹⁰⁰ The veneration of Husayn became a characteristic feature of the religious make-up of late

⁹⁵ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 174-5 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil's *Mutajaddidat*).

⁹⁶ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 65-6, 67, 68; *Khitat*, IV, 52.

⁹⁷ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, IV, 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, II, 284.

¹⁰⁰ For Ibn Jubayr's description of the rituals at the Husayn's shrine see, C. Williams, "The Qura'nic Inscription on the Tabut of al-Husayn", *Islamic Art*, II (1987), 3-13, esp., 9-10; Lev, *State*, 151-2.

medieval Egypt and lost any Shi'ite meaning. More mysterious in its purpose but no less significant was the restoration work carried out by Saladin at the Mosque of the Nilometer, which was built by Badr al-Jamali. The meaning of the mosque is not entirely clear. However, the Nilometer had a great significance for the agriculture of Egypt and served as an indicator of the size of the harvest. Saladin followed the former Fatimid rulers who associated themselves with the Nile and the rituals connected with the river.¹⁰¹

The full impact of Saladin's religious policies is mirrored by the account of the Maghrebi traveller Ibn Jubayr, who visited Egypt in 1183. In the record of his travels, (*rihla*), he vividly describes the unpleasant reception he and the other passengers received from the custom authorities at the port of Alexandria. The tax collected from them was *zakat* and it was levied in merchandise and cash money. Ibn Jubayr criticizes the custom officials for also collecting *zakat* from pilgrims who had brought with them only the provisions they needed for the journey to the Holy Cities. He also notes other irregularities in the collection of *zakat*.¹⁰² On the whole, Maghrebi travellers and pilgrims were roughly treated by the custom officials in Alexandria and Ibn Jubayr does not conceal his hard feelings about the ordeal he and others went through. But he does not lay the blame on Saladin. In his view, Saladin was not aware of what went on at the customs office of Alexandria, and had he been aware he would have ordered the collection of *zakat* in the proper way. In fact, Ibn Jubayr was very enthusiastic about everything he saw in Egypt and highly appreciative of Saladin. His account provides an opportunity to see how Saladin's religious policy was viewed by the public, or at least what impression it left on one observant visitor from abroad.

Notwithstanding the difficulties at the port, Alexandria much impressed Ibn Jubayr. He expresses his admiration for the law colleges and hostels (*maharis*) designated for students and pious men from abroad who received allowances, medical care and had access to bathhouses. Saladin showed a personal interest in the welfare of the Maghrebi pilgrims (*abna' al-sabil*), who arrived in Alexandria by land after an arduous journey through the desert. All Maghrebi travellers were entitled to a daily portion of bread

¹⁰¹ Ibn Duqmaq, IV, 115-6. For the rituals connected with the Nile and the Nilometer in the Fatimid period, see Sanders, ch. 5, esp., 116-7.

¹⁰² Ibn Jubayr, 39-40 (Arabic), 31 (English).

and this expenditure was financed through pious endowments set up by Saladin and by the incomes derived from the levy of *zakat*. Saladin's benevolence extended to religious institutions as well. The mosques and preachers in Alexandria were supported by Saladin and received on average five *dinars* per month.¹⁰³

Religious institutions and people of religion were also massively supported by Saladin in Cairo. Ibn Jubayr notes that the holy shrines in the capital were well maintained, the government appointed supervisors over them and paid their salaries. The tomb of Shafi'i and the adjacent law college with its bathhouses made a great impact on Ibn Jubayr. The costs of maintaining this complex were very high and the money was controlled by al-Khabushani.¹⁰⁴ Another religious institution which was on expensive to maintain was the Ancient Mosque in Fustat. It enjoyed a hefty daily income of thirty *dinars*, derived apparently from its pious endowments, which were spent on the salaries of its large personnel of men of religion and ancillary staff. Many other religious institutions in the capital such as mosques, shrines, and law colleges, as well as professors of law and a diverse population of ascetics and destitute people were supported directly by the treasury (*bayt al-mal*). According to Ibn Jubayr, Saladin's monthly expenditure was in excess of 2,000 *dinars*.¹⁰⁵ People arriving from the Maghreb were treated in Cairo no less well than in Alexandria. They could stay and study at the Tulunid mosque and their sojourn was financed by the authorities.¹⁰⁶ Ibn Jubayr was very much impressed by Saladin's hospitals. The hospital in Cairo included three separate wards: for men, women and the insane, and the same is true for the hospital in Fustat.¹⁰⁷

Ibn Jubayr's testimony on the support given by Saladin's regime to people arriving to Egypt from the Maghreb tallies very well with other evidence for Saladin's religious policies. Saladin was interested in attracting people whose skills he could use for the implementation of his Sunni religious policies. The fact that they were

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 42-3 (Arabic), 34-5 (English). Maqrizi says that in 570/1174-1175 Saladin while visiting Alexandria set up there a hospital, law college and houses for Maghribi pilgrims. See, *Khitat*, III, 380.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Jubayr, 46-7, 48 (Arabic), 38-9, 40 (English).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 50 (Arabic), 42 (English).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 52 (Arabic), 44 (English).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 51-2 (Arabic), 43-4 (English).

foreigners, as explicitly stated in the endowment document of the *khanqa* al-Salahiyya in Cairo, made them dependent on and loyal to Saladin. Such groups enlarged the social base on which the regime relied. Saladin used the experience he had gained in Egypt in Jerusalem where he faced a similar problem in re-establishing Sunni Islam and creating a religious personnel loyal to him.¹⁰⁸

The extent of the support that Saladin's regime gave to people of religion can be gauged from a remark made *en passant* by 'Imad al-Din. He says that in 581/1185-1186, there were 600 jurists at the law colleges in Damascus who were supported by the state.¹⁰⁹

Conclusions: The character of religious life in Egypt was determined and shaped by two different and, to certain extent, opposing forces. On the one hand, from above, the rulers of the country imposed their own brand of Islam and the religious rites associated with it. They did so by exercising coercive power augmented by their ability to establish and foster large-scale religious institutions, which also left a visual impact on the urban landscape. On the other hand, the masses cultivated their own brand of religiosity which can be labelled as popular Islam. The Fatimids and the Ayyubids did not strive to combat popular religion; at most they tried to regulate some forms of the public behavior typically associated with its cults and rites. In fact, they were eager to cultivate popular religion and to be identified with it cults and holy people. The building activities of the Fatimids, and to lesser extent of the Ayyubids as well, in the Qarafa are a reflection of attempts to dominate popular religion by extending patronage. The relations that evolved between certain rulers and holy men embody the confluence between the Islam of the ruling elite and that of the masses. The patronage given by the rulers to holy men was not only politically motivated, it reflected also the inner religious world of the rulers themselves.

When seen in this context the Ayyubid period is part of an outgoing process and the contribution of the Ayyubid rulers to the

¹⁰⁸ For Jerusalem, see Y. Frenkel's two Hebrew publications: "An Ayyubi Pious Endowment Document from Jerusalem—The Waqf of al-Khanqa al-Salahiyya", *Catedra*, 65 (1992), 27-37, and "The Establishment of the Waqf of the Madrasa al-Salahiyya by Saladin in Jerusalem", in *Palestine in the Mamluk Period*, (ed) J. Drori (Jerusalem, 1992), 61-86.

¹⁰⁹ Although on that occasion the support distributed among them was more symbolic than real. See, 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 482.

shaping of the religious character of medieval Egypt is rather modest. First of all, much of the character of the religious life was determined from below and not from above. Secondly, the process of de-Islamization of religious life in Egypt was quite advanced before the arrival of the Ayyubids in the country. The Ayyubids introduced the law college as the central educational and religious institution in the capital and to some extent in the rest of Egypt, too. The institutions built by the Ayyubid rulers enjoyed the richest pious endowments. With some exceptions, such as Qadi al-Fadil's law college, the law colleges established by Ayyubid emirs and administrators in Fustat-Cairo were modest and less significant.¹¹⁰ Notwithstanding the building activity during the Ayyubid age, the great proliferation of law colleges and Sufi *khanqas* and *zawiyas* in Cairo took place only in the Mamluk period.

Saladin's religious policies betray great understanding of the public and political aspects of religion. He became associated with the oldest Muslim institution in Egypt—the Ancient Mosque in Fustat—and through the Mosque of the Nilometer with the life-giving Nile. He introduced Sunni educational and religious institutions and was instrumental in divesting the cult of Husayn of its Shi'ite meaning and character.

¹¹⁰ The situation in Damascus was rather different, there the military class, administrators and people of religion and not the Ayyubid rulers were the most important sponsors of religious institutions. See, R. S. Humphreys, "Politics and Architectural Patronage in Ayyubid Damascus", in *The Islamic World, Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, (eds) C. E. Bosworth and others (New Jersey, 1991), 151-74, esp., 153-4. In fact, within the Ayyubid family, women constituted half of the patrons of religious institutions built in Damascus. See, R. S. Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus", *Muqarnas*, 11(1994), 35-54, esp., 36.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARMY

a. *The Size and Military Composition of the Army*

I. The army of the late Fatimid period was destroyed and dispersed by Saladin, and replaced by a new military force. Two socio-military groups suffered mostly from Saladin's policy: the Blacks and the Armenians. In the Fatimid army, the Blacks had served as infantry and Saladin found little use for them in the new army he created in Egypt. A racial bias against the Blacks may also have played a role in Saladin's treatment of them. The Armenians posed a different problem altogether. First of all, the Armenian troops who were in the service of the Fatimids had been Christians. On the other hand, the Armenians could serve as both cavalry and infantry. This characteristic trait made them highly attractive as military man-power as is testified by their massive employment in the Byzantine army. However, in Qadi al-Fadil's letter to Baghdad from 1174, the destruction of both the Blacks and Armenians is given as one of Saladin's achievements. Qadi al-Fadil describes Saladin's actions in religious terms as a war against infidels (the Armenians) and pagans (the Blacks). In the course of the Battle of the Blacks many Blacks were killed and the rest were driven out of Cairo and dispersed. Saladin's policy toward the Blacks was resolute: he ordered his military governors (*wula al-harb*) to fight and kill them wherever they found them.¹

The core of Saladin's new army in Egypt was the expeditionary force dispatched to Egypt by Nur al-Din in 1169. The question of who took the initiative for dispatching this force to Egypt is presented in different ways in the accounts of 'Imad al-Din and Ibn al-Athir. 'Imad al-Din says that the initiative was that of Shirkuh, who urged Nur al-Din to begin military action following the invasion of Egypt by the Crusaders. Nur al-Din responded positively and financed the expedition to the tune of 200,000 *dinars*, but the recruitment of troops was done by Shirkuh. 'Imad al-Din testifies that he was present at the military review held by Shirkuh,

¹ Anonymous, *Bustan al-Jami'*, (ed) Cl. Cahen *BEO*, 7-8(1937-1938), 39; Maqrizi, *Itti'az*, III, 313-4. The term *wula al-harb*, which appears in the *Bustan*, belongs to Fatimid military nomenclature.

who enlisted over 5,000 unemployed horsemen. These troops were augmented by a force of 2,000 cavalry assigned by Nur al-Din for this campaign. He also dispatched with Shirkuh a group of his emirs, amongst whom were two of his military slaves (*mamalik*) while the others were men of his inner circle (*khawwas*); apparently, free-born people.² Ibn al-Athir's account of these events is different. He presents the campaign of 1169 as Nur al-Din's initiative asserting that Shirkuh went to Egypt with the army of Nur al-Din (*al-ʿasakir al-Nuriyya*).³ But in an passing remark, in his earlier work *Bahir*, he admits that Shirkuh recruited Turkmen for this campaign.⁴ Ibn al-Athir describes in detail the resources allocated by Nur al-Din for the 1169 campaign. Shirkuh was given 200,000 *dinars* as well as clothing, pack-animals, weapons and other supplies and equipment. Nur al-Din chose 2,000 cavalry from his *ʿaskar* and, according to the later work *Kamil*, he also recruited 6,000 Turkmen, paying twenty *dinars* as a special bonus to each horsemen among Shirkuh's troops.⁵

It is not possible to decide who took the initiative for the 1169 campaign, but the socio-military terms employed by both authors are common and well understood within the broader context of Islamic military history. In the wake of the Seljukid invasion of the Middle East in the second half of the eleventh century, the Turkmen were widely dispersed in the region. They constituted a reservoir of military man-power ready for employment, and they were a natural choice for recruitment for the 1169 campaign against Egypt. The existence of military slaves and the dual composition of Nur al-Din's military elite (free-born people and slaves) are typical and long-standing features that need no special comment. The review (*ʿard*) held by Shirkuh on the eve of his campaign to Egypt was standard practice for the reviewing and inspection of troops. The only term which poses some difficulty is the word *ʿaskar*, which refers to the 2,000 cavalry assigned by Nur al-Din for this cam-

² Al-Bundari, 75-6.

³ Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 220; *al-Bahir*, 137.

⁴ *Al-Bahir*, 141.

⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, XI, 222-3; *al-Bahir*, 139. Ibn al-Athir's version is adopted by Abu Shama, who reports it as his own independent account. See, I, pt.2, 392. The differences between Ibn al-Athir's *Bahir*, less hostile to Saladin, and *Kamil* are interesting. The remark that Shirkuh himself recruited most of the troops for the campaign, the 5,000-6,000 Turkmen, was expunged from the account in *Kamil*.

paign. Gibb understands this term as meaning a regular regiment of the army.⁶ R. Stephen Humphreys says that in the Ayyubid period this term denoted the standing army of a certain principality. But it was also used in referring to the military forces of specific Ayyubid rulers.⁷ In our context *‘askar* refers to troops, who formed part of Nur al-Din’s own regiments i.e. the military forces maintained and recruited by Nur al-Din himself.

It is clear from these reports that Saladin established and consolidated his rule in Egypt with the help of a very small army. In order to deal with the many internal and external threats that Saladin faced in Egypt he had to enlarge his army. However, the build-up of Saladin’s military forces remains enigmatic. That such process took place in a short period of time is indicated by accounts which describe the strength of Saladin’s army at the beginning of his independent rule in Egypt. The information at our disposal is highly authoritative, being derived by Maqrizi from Qadi al-Fadil’s *Mutajaddidat*. On 8 Muharram 567/11 September 1171, Saladin held a review of the old and new armies. The army was made up of 167 *tulbs* of which 147 were present at the review. 7,000 Bedouin of the Judham tribe also showed up, but Saladin enrolled only 1,300 of them for service. Most of the troops belonged to the *tawashi* category while the rest were *qaraghulams*. Qadi al-Fadil explains the terms he uses. It seems that for him as well as for the other Egyptian administrators the military nomenclature of the eastern Islamic world that was introduced to Egypt with the arrival of Saladin was a new one. And he clarifies for the benefit of his readers the terms he employs. Qadi al-Fadil says that *tulb* means in the Turkish (Ghuzz) language a military formation whose strength can vary from 70 to 100 to up to 200 cavalymen. However, he says that the cavalry force that paraded at the review was 14,000 strong. This leaves the actual size of a *tulb* rather vague. The commanding officer of the *tulb* was an emir who, as a mark of his rank, had a standard and a trumpet. *Tawashi* were highly paid troops. Their remuneration ranged from 700-1,000 up to 1,200 *dinars*. A *tawashi* soldier had at his disposal horses, pack animals and a *ghulam* (a slave or servant) who carried his weapons.⁸ Qadi

⁶ See, his “The Armies of Saladin”, *Cahiers d’histoire Égyptienne*, (1951); reprinted in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, (Boston, 1962), 74.

⁷ See, his “The Emergence of the Mamluk Army”, *SI*, 45 (1977), 77-9.

⁸ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 139; *Itti’az*, III, 327; cf. D. Ayalon, “Studies on the Struc-

al-Fadil's description tallies well with William of Tyre's account of Saladin's army at the battle of Mont Gisard (25 November, 1177) which ended in a debacle for the Muslims. The overall strength of Saladin's army which invaded southern Palestine on that occasion was 26,000 men. But most of these troops were lightly-armed, mounted on camels and pack-animals. Only 8,000 were *tawashi*, who are highly regarded by William of Tyre, and the rest were *qaraghulams*. 1,000 elite troops served as Saladin's bodyguard; they, like Saladin himself, wore a distinctive yellow silk costume over their armor. William of Tyre alludes to *halqa* whose existence at such an early date is also attested to by Arabic sources.⁹ Quite obviously the terms *tawashi* and *qaraghulams* refer to troops of different qualities. The distinction between the two, and superiority of the *tawashi*, was based on the quality of their arms and armor. It seems that the *tawashi* possessed a full set of arms and armor, and therefore needed a baggage train and servants.

II. The Seljukid invasion of the Muslim world enhanced the position of mounted archers, who were the main military specialists of the Islamic armies of the twelfth century. Nonetheless, contingents of heavy cavalry were also employed. The presence of such troops had already been noted by the Frankish chroniclers of the first Crusade.¹⁰ This should not surprise us too much. It is important to bear in mind David Nicolle's observation made in the introduction to his monumental *Arms and Armor of the Crusading Era 1050-1350*. He writes: "one point which will, I hope, become clear is that no single culture had a monopoly of technological

ture of the Mamluk Army", *BSOAS*, 15(1953), 465-6. The term *tawashi* is part of the military nomenclature of the Ayyubid age—not of the Fatimid. The references of Ibn al-Athir and Maqrizi to a certain Fatimid officer from 496/1102-1103 as Sa'd al-Dawla al-Tawashi is apparently mistaken. Ibn Muyassar gives his name as Sa'd al-Dawla al-Qawwasi. See, 74. For the reference to Ibn al-Athir, see editor's note c on p. 74. For Maqrizi, see *Itti'az*, III, 32.

⁹ William of Tyre, II, 430-1; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 554 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy, who says that in 569/1173-1174 Saladin gave to his brother for an expedition to Yemen 1,000 cavalry including troops from his *halqa*); cf. H. A. R. Gibb, *The Life of Saladin*, (Oxford, 1973), 21, n.3; Ayalon, "Studies", XV(1953), 448. A reference to *halqa* from the reign of Nur al-Din has been brought to light by Anne-Marie Eddé. The source is Ibn Abi Tayy quoted by Ibn Furat. See, her "Quelques institutions militaires ayyoubides", in *Egypt and Syria*, 163-4.

¹⁰ Lev, *State*, 98, n.20; J. France, *Victory in the East. A Military History of the First Crusade*, (Cambridge, 1994), 149, 359-60.

innovation or even of leadership in fashion".¹¹ We should give credence to the descriptions of the Frankish chroniclers. William of Tyre's description of the Muslim army at the battle of Babayn is in the same vein. He says that Shirkuh's army was 12,000 men strong, but he distinguishes between 9,000 troops who "wore the breast plate and helmet and the other 3,000 who used only bows and arrows". These two types of troops constituted the core of Shirkuh's army, which was also augmented by Bedouin levies. The Bedouin fought in their traditional way employing only the lance. Speaking of the Crusader army, William of Tyre employs the same differentiation as he does when referring to the Muslim force. He distinguishes between 347 knights (i.e. fully armed and armored warriors), and Turcoples—lightly armed cavalry.¹² Muslim historians, like William of Tyre, are careful to distinguish between these two types of Christian cavalry. 'Imad al-Din, for instance, explains that the cavalry force that landed from the Norman *tarrada* ships on the beaches of Alexandria in 1174 was composed of 1,000 knights and 500 Turcoples.¹³ Usama ibn Munqidh refers to Turcoples as the archers of the Franks.¹⁴ The Turcoples were the offspring of marriages between Turks and Christian women and Muslim converts to Christianity. The existence of such a socio-military group reflects a wider and more complex issue: the treatment and absorption of foreign and conquered population by both the Christian and Muslim states of the Eastern Mediterranean region in medieval times.¹⁵

William of Tyre's description of Muslim troops as clad in armor is corroborated by Arabic sources. The most illuminating example is the description of the battle fought between Dirgham

¹¹ Published N. Y., 1988. See, I, x. The pictorial evidence collected and analyzed by Nicolle shows that armored cavalry existed in the Eurasian Steppes, the earliest attestation being from sixth-seventh centuries. See, I, 4, para. 1A-E, II, 630; I, 7, para. 19A-H, II, 634; I, 7, para. 20; II, 634; I, 16, para. 45A-F, 46 and 47, II, 639; I, 17, para. 48, II, 640; I, 170, para. 440, II, 721.

¹² See, II, 331.

¹³ Al-Bundari, 174.

¹⁴ See, 50-1 (Arabic), 79 (English).

¹⁵ The research literature dealing with the Turcoples is quite extensive. For two recent contributions. see B. Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, (N. J., 1984), 76; A. G. C. Savvides, "Late Byzantine and Western Historiographers on Turkish Mercenaries in Greek and Latin Armies: the Turcoples/Tourkopouloi", in *The Making of Byzantine History*, Studies dedicated to Donald M. Nicol, (eds) R. Beaton and C. Roueché (Aldershot, 1993), 122-37.

and the combined force of Shawar and Shirkuh. At the outset of the battle, the soldiers had to take off their armor which became unbearable warm in the heat. The soldiers stored their armor in a small tents under the care of their servants.¹⁶ In itself, this account sheds no direct light on how the *tawashi* was armed and fought. David Ayalon says that the *tawashi* of the Ayyubid period was a free-born warrior and he equates him with the non-Mamluk horsemen who were found in great numbers in the Mamluk armies toward the end of the Mamluk period.¹⁷ In military terms (i.e. armament and training) and in high socio-military status the Ayyubid *tawashi* can be compared to the Mamluk *faris* trained in *furusīyya*. By his training the Mamluk *faris* was not merely a mounted archer. He was a many-sided warrior able to employ in addition to a bow also a lance and a sword. Indirect support for this statement is supplied by Maqrizi. He says that in 577/1181-1182, the construction of the fortress (*burj*) of Suis was completed, and it was manned with twenty *fursan* (pl. of *faris*). Their task was to guard the road to Upper Egypt which was used in the trade in alum with the Franks (meaning the Crusaders or Europeans in general).¹⁸ Certainly, these *fursan* were knights and not mounted archers. Maqrizi's use of *fursan* is anachronistic, or a deliberate substitution of *faris* for *tawashi* in order to be understood by his readers. How the term *tawashi* came to denote an eunuch in Mamluk times is unclear. Ayalon quotes Ibn Khaldun who says that *tawashi* in the terminology of the Eastern Islamic lands means eunuch.¹⁹ But this equation reflects the linguistic usage of the Mamluk times. In the Ayyubid period when a certain *tawashi* happened to be an eunuch the sources take the trouble to state this congruity explicitly.²⁰

¹⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 419-20.

¹⁷ See, "Studies", XV(1953), 465-6.

¹⁸ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 95. For the training of the Mamluk horseman, see H. Rabie, "The Training of the Mamluk Faris", in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, (eds) V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (London, 1975), 153-63. For a discussion of the mining of alum and its trade, see Rabie, 82-5; Tsugitaka, 67-8.

¹⁹ See, "On the Eunuchs in Islam", *JSAI*, 1(1979), 79.

²⁰ For example, Ibn al-Muqaffa', says that Saladin appointed Qaraqush over the Fatimid palaces and he describes him as a: "*tawashi* who was also an eunuch". See, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, III, part, 2, 66 (Arabic). Further evidence is adduced by Anne-Marie Eddé who, in a private communication of 13 April 1995, drew my attention to the case of the *tawashi* Shams al-Din Sawab al-'Adili quoting Ibn Wasil, V, 34 and Ibn Shaddad, *Al-A'laq al-Khatira* (Dimashq),

When Usama ibn Munqidh's memoirs are examined from the point of view of military history one fact clearly emerges. Usama and the military society of Shayzar, his principality, fought as heavy cavalry employing the lance. They fought as knights exactly as their Frankish opponents did. Mounted archers are not mentioned. The conclusion that there were military similarities between the armed forces of Shayzar and the Crusaders is reinforced, when Usama's evaluation of his own society and that of the enemy is considered. Usama saw himself and his comrades as knights, and the term *faris* is applied by him when referring to himself and the Franks alike. Not surprisingly Usama was familiar with the military terminology employed by the Crusaders. He says that the infantry troops of Shayzar would be termed sergeants by the Franks.²¹

The fact that heavy cavalry, fighting with lances and employing shock tactics, was to be found in the Muslim armies of the twelfth century, does not undermine the importance of mounted archers. Both Muslims and their Christian contemporaries were well aware of this. For example, William of Tyre explains the military advantage of the Turks over the Christian forces by the swiftness of their horses, light equipment and mounted archers while the military assets of the Christians were their military training and armor.²² A much quoted letter of Nur al-Din reflects a similar view. In a reply to al-'Adid, Nur al-Din wrote that the answer to the armor of the Franks was the arrows of the Turks.²³ But we must go a step beyond these well-known facts. William of Tyre makes the observations noted above in the context of Conrad's march through Asia Minor in 1147, and the Turks he refers to are Turkmen. Undoubtedly, mounted archers and a plenty of swift horses were characteristic of the nomads and their style of warfare. The Muslim rulers of Asia Minor and the Middle East enlisted nomadic Turkmen warriors for military service in great numbers. However, the standing

(ed) S. Dahan (Damascus, 1956), 238, and 208, n.5. In the Ayyubid period, some of the emirs referred to in the sources as *tawashi* were given large *iqta's* and had to provide up to 250 horesmen as military levies to their Sultan. see, Tsugitaka, 50. It appears from Maqrizi's references to the Mamluk period that the equation of *tawashi* with eunuch was not self-evident. See, *Khitat*, IV, 130, 131.

²¹ Usama ibn Munqidh, 40-2, 48-51, 57-8, 61-2, 67-70, 76-9 86, 90-1, (Arabic), 64-5, 96 (English).

²² William of Tyre, II, 171; France, 147-8.

²³ Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 460.

armies of these rulers were more diversified and also included heavy cavalry at least in moderate numbers.

The other point revealed by the review of 1171, is the employment by Saladin of the remnants of the Fatimid army. The presence, in Fustat, of organized socio-military groups of the former Fatimid army such as Blacks and Masamida—Berbers from the western Sudan—is attested to until as late as 587/1191-1192.²⁴ During Fatimid times, both groups fought as infantry and there is no reason to think that this had changed.²⁵ The continuities in employment over two decades of some elements of the former Fatimid armed forces by Saladin should not be over emphasized. The main characteristic of Saladin's army is a complete rupture with Fatimid military tradition and organization.

It seems that the date of Rajab 577/November-December 1181 can be considered as a watershed in the military history of Egypt under Saladin. Maqrizi quotes two fragments from Qadi al-Fadil's *Mutajaddidat*; the first refers to Saladin's examination of the *iqta'* system and the second refers to the strength of the army. The first parts makes little sense. It seems that Maqrizi distorted or abbreviated Qadi al-Fadil's account in a way that its essence is lost. It is said that the estimated revenues (*'ibra*) of the *iqta'*s were registered as well as the actual incomes, above or beyond the estimated ones. It appears that Saladin increased the *iqta'*s to those who had merited it. The second part of the account is straightforward: it says that the overall strength of the army was 8,640 cavalry, and its officer corps included 111 emirs. The army was made up of two types of troops: *tawashi* and *qaraghulam*. The strength of these two contingents was 6,976 and 1,553 respectively (i.e. slightly below the figure of 8,640). The total expenditure on the army reached about 3,670,500 *dinars*. In addition there were Bedouin levies paid through the *iqta'* system, and other troops. Among these were "Egyptian"—i.e. former Fatimid—soldiers to whom certain spe-

²⁴ Ibn al-Dawadari, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jami' al-Ghurar*, (ed) S. 'Abd al-Fatah 'Ashur (Cairo, 1972), VII, 109-10. Ibn al-Muqaffa' says that Blacks (*sudan*) were among the troops of the garrison of Acre captured by the Crusaders following the fall of the town. In fact he says that among the prisoners taken were also Kurds, Ghuzz and Bedouin of the Kinaniyya tribe. See, III, pt.2, 91 (Arabic, in the text referring to the Kinaniyya the letter *ta'* should be amended to *nun.*), 155 (English). For the military role of the Kinaniyya in the Fatimid period and during Saladin's time, see Lev, *State*, 103, n.34, 126-7.

²⁵ Nasir-i Khusrau, 49.

cific sources of income were assigned. Apparently, these troops were engaged as mercenaries in times of need.²⁶ This account indicates that expenditure on the army took the lion's share of the state's resources. In 569/1173-1174, Saladin explained to Nur al-Din's emissary, al-Qaysarani, who came to Egypt requesting that Saladin present an account of income derived from Egypt, that the high-ranking dignitaries of the state became used to a high standard of living. They took control of places (meaning apparently their *iqta's*) and it would be impossible to dislodge them.²⁷ We must bear in mind that it was in Saladin's interest to present the revenues of Egypt as low and his military expenditure as high.

There is a wide gap between the figure given as the pay of the *tawashi* trooper (see the account of the review of 1171 also based on the authority of Qadi al-Fadil's *Mutajaddidat*) and the total spent on the army in 1181. The pay of the *tawashi* must have been much below the sum of 700-1,200 *dinars*. In fact, the total expenditure on the army given for 1181 is excessive. In sharp contrast to these exorbitant figures stands the report that every *tawashi* who was dispatched on the expedition to Yemen (577/1181-1182) received ten *dinars* only.²⁸ This was certainly a special bonus paid in addition to the regular income that *tawashi* troops derived from their *iqta's*. Nonetheless, this modest sum speaks for itself. On the other hand, the numbers of troops quoted for 1181 are in line with Maqrizi's observation that during Saladin's period there were in Egypt only 12,000 cavalry. This number was reduced to 8,500 cavalry at the time of Saladin's son, al-Malik al-ʿAziz ʿUthman. Maqrizi says that there were horsemen who had from ten to twenty to up to one hundred *atbaʿ*. Therefore, when the troops paraded outside Cairo, their numbers were much higher than 8,500.²⁹ The *atbaʿ* in this account mean the servants and the slaves of the *tawashi* whose participation in parades inflated the overall number of troops. Also other figures quoted for the strength of the Ayyubid armies during the rule of Saladin and his successors indicate that it was a small force made up of cavalry only.³⁰

²⁶ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 139; cf. Gibb, *The Life of Saladin*, 31, n.4. Maqrizi's account has been translated into English and discussed by Tsugitaka. See, 61-2.

²⁷ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 73.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 152.

³⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ says the Saladin's army was 10,000 men strong and con-

These figures can be compared to those quoted for the strength of the army in the late Fatimid period. Maqrizi quotes an account written by Ibn Mammati, who says that once he was asked by Qadi al-Fadil about the number of troops in the time of the vizier Tala'i ibn Ruzzik. Ibn Mammati was in charge of the Office of the Army and, according to his statement, the register of the department of the *'ard* (review and inspection) included the names of 40,000 cavalry and 30,000 black (*sudan*) infantry.³¹ Elsewhere Maqrizi quotes that same account but gives different figures: 40,000 cavalry, 36,000 infantry and 10,000 marines (*muqatila*, fighters) on board ten galleys.³² The existence of a special Marine Corps is not attested to by other sources and the number of 1,000 marines on ten galleys is unrealistic. However, Maqrizi also quotes an another set of figures from a different source: 'Uthman ibn Ibrahim al-Nabulusi (d. 1261), the well-known author of several administrative works. He says that when Shirkuh was given 1,000 cavalry to help Shawar regain power in Egypt, he complained that his force was too small to face the Fatimid army which included 10,000 cavalry and 40,000 black slave troops (*'abd*). Shirkuh also made an allusion to 10,000 marines and *iqta'* troops.³³ The relative strengths of cavalry to infantry referred to by al-Nabulusi seems more reasonable than the high numbers of cavalry quoted by Maqrizi on the authority of Ibn Mammati.

b. *The Ethnic Composition of the Army*

I. Maqrizi is very explicit about the ethnic composition of the new army created by Saladin in Egypt; it was made up of Kurds and Turks (*atrak*).³⁴ The army with which Saladin established his rule in Egypt was certainly composed of these two ethnic groups. The

sisted of *tawashi*, *qaraghulams* and *mamluks* while the army of al-'Adil was made up of 10,000 *tawashi*. See, III, 110, 131 (Arabic), 163, 221 (English). I owe these references to the kindness of Anne-Marie Eddé. Maqrizi says that in 590/1193-1194, the Sultan al-'Aziz 'Uthman left Cairo for Syria with 27 emirs and 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 troops of the *halqa* leaving behind 13 emirs and 700 cavalry only. See, *Suluk*, 150.

³¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 138.

³² *Ibid*, I, 152.

³³ *Ibid*, I, 138-9.

³⁴ *Ibid*, I, 152.

numerical strength of each group is unknown, but it seems that the largest contingent consisted of Turkmen (*turkuman*). The term *turkuman* refers to nomadic Turkmen tribes, which became widely dispersed throughout the Middle East and Asia Minor after the Seljukid invasion of these regions in the second half of the eleventh century. The place of the Turkmen tribes within the broader matrix of Middle Eastern society and politics is not easily defined. On the one hand, they fended for themselves and posed a threat even to firmly established political entities in the region. On the other hand, they constituted a pool of military manpower ready to take service with rulers and states under various kinds of agreement. For example, Turkmen were employed by Christian Armenian rulers as well as by Saladin in Syria. They fought against the armies of Third Crusaders when these were crossing Asia Minor.³⁵ The Seljukid rulers employed Turkmen on a large scale in their armies, and they even served with the Byzantines as mercenaries.³⁶ A systematic study of the relations between various nomadic groups and states in the medieval Muslim Middle East is still needed. Sibṭ in Jawzī's *Mir'at al-Zaman* is a treasure house of information on this topic, but it has not been studied yet from this point of view. Nonetheless, information is abundant in other sources as well. For instance, William of Tyre recounts two interesting episodes about the relations between Turkmen and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. The first concerns a surprise but abortive attack on Jerusalem by the Turkmen and the other tells of the breach of an agreement with the Turkmen by the Franks. Bedouin and Turkmen were permitted by the king of Jerusalem to stay in the Banyas district to pasture their horses. Nonetheless, they were attacked and their herds were looted. Many of them were killed and the rest fled the area.³⁷

³⁵ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 154, 155, 156. For the impact of Turkmen nomads on Asia Minor, see S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor*, (Berkeley, 1971), 169-94.

³⁶ A. Bombaci, "The Army of the Seljuks of Rum", *Annali Instituto Orientale di Napoli*, 38(1978), 346-8, 354. The employment of mercenary troops was widespread and quite often did not respect confessional boundaries. See, J. Richard, "An Account of the Battle of Hittin Referring to the Frankish Mercenaries in Oriental Moslem States", *Speculum*, 27(1952), 171-5; Y. Lev, "Army, Regime and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/969-1094", *IJMES*, 19(1987), 338. For Muslim North Africa, see J. F. P. Hopkins, *Medieval Muslim Government in Barbary*, (London, 1958), 73.

³⁷ See, II, 215-7, 255-6.

The fact that Saladin's army in Egypt consisted of Turkmen is attested to by no less an authority than Ibn Mammati. In his book on the Egyptian administration during the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, he says that the army included Turks (*atrak*), Kurds and Turkmen. Ibn Mammati's observation is a casual remark appearing in the section of his work dealing with *iqta'*.³⁸ Given Ibn Mammati's position and knowledge his remark must be regarded as significant. Turks and Turkmen belong, of course, to the same ethnic group. Thus we have to ask what Ibn Mammati meant when he refers Turks and Turkmen as separate groups. One way of understanding this account is to regard the term Turks to mean Turkish military slaves (*mamluks*) and freedmen in contrast to Turkish free-born socio-military groups such as the Turkmen. A clear-cut conclusion is hampered by the habitual use of the term *atrak* in a generic way meaning troops of Turkish origin in general. For example, Abu Shama, in his own independent statement, says that Qaraqush, the military slave (*ghulam*) of Taqi al-Din, conquered the coast of North Africa with a group of Turks and Bedouin.³⁹ In this account, the term *turk* (sing. of *atrak*) is used in a loose way, and there is no reason to assume that Turkish military slaves or freedmen are being referred to. The same holds for a passing reference to a contingent of 800 Turkish troops from Egypt, which appears in the annals for the year 578/1182-1183.⁴⁰

On the other hand, our sources distinguish clearly between Kurds and Turks. Thus, Ibn Abi Tayy is very precise in identifying the ethnic origin of the emir who asked for the town of Ibrim in Nubia as an *iqta'*: he was a Kurd named Ibrahim. His request was granted and a group of unemployed Kurds was sent to join him.⁴¹ The same concern with precise ethnic identifications is reflected by a short report from 581/1185-1186, which says that Kurds were granted *iqta'*s in territories beyond the Euphrates.⁴² The Kurds in Saladin's army kept their tribal organization and names of Kurdish tribal groups occasionally are mentioned in the sources. If our understanding of Ibn Mammati's *en passant* remark is correct, then

³⁸ Ibn Mammati, *Kitab al-Qawanin al-Dawanin*, (ed) A. S. Atiya (Cairo, 1943), 369.

³⁹ See, I, pt,2, 547-8.

⁴⁰ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 38.

⁴¹ Abu Shama, I, pt,2, 532-3.

⁴² Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 62.

we must wonder what was the relative significance of the each group mentioned by him.

This question has been the subject of studies by Ayalon, Humphreys and most recently by Anne-Marie Eddé. Ayalon, who has dealt with it extensively, reached the conclusion that under Saladin and the Ayyubids the Turks played a more significant role than the Kurds, and Turkish military slaves occupied a central place in the armies of all of the Ayyubid rulers.⁴³ In his study, Ayalon makes an extensive use of Ibn al-Athir and the information derived from him is highly regarded. Ibn al-Athir is certainly a convenient source to use, but his writings can not be simply regarded as a repository of straightforward, reliable and easily available data. Ibn al-Athir must be used critically and with caution. He has his deficiencies. His account of the Fatimid period reflects an anti-Isma'ili bias, and his account of Saladin is no less problematic. An examination of two accounts of Ibn al-Athir used by Ayalon exemplifies this point. The purport of both accounts is that rule in Egypt passed from the Fatimids to the Turks. Ayalon understands these accounts and other data as testifying to the predominance of the Turks in the Ayyubid period.⁴⁴ But, when Ibn al-Athir speaks about the passing of the rule from the Fatimids to the Turks, he means Nur al-Din (himself a Turk) not Saladin and the Ayyubids. It must be remembered that Saladin conquered Egypt while serving Nur al-Din. Certainly, Ibn al-Athir regards and portrays Saladin as Nur al-Din's lieutenant in Egypt. The second passage used by Ayalon in support of his view about the predominance of the Turks in the Ayyubid period is no less problematic. The passage in question is quoted by Abu Shama on the authority of Ibn Abi Tayy. It contains a story told to Saladin's brother, Turanshah, by Qadi al-Jalis who was a close companion of al-'Adid. In one of his visits to al-'Adid, Qadi al-Jalis noticed two Turkish *mamluks*, and al-'Adid prophesied that the Fatimid rule would be brought to end by people wearing an attire like these two *mamluks*.⁴⁵ This account cannot be taken at face value as acknowledging a supposed Turkish predominance. The ability of the Fatimid Imam to foresee the future is a belief deeply-rooted in Ismailism and a typical motif in

⁴³ See, his "Aspects of the Mamluk Phenomenon", *Der Islam*, pt.II, 1-2, 7-8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pt.II, paragraphs I and II; 5, paragraph, IV.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pt.II, 6-7.

the writings of Ismaʿili authors. It was used as a literary device for a retrospective justification of policies and events. In fact, a quite similar story is told regarding the absorption of the first Turkish troops into the Fatimid army in the second half of the tenth century in Egypt.⁴⁶ The only thing that can be concluded from this story is that Qadi al-Jalis entertained his new masters with tales derived from Fatimid (Ismaʿili) lore.

The question of the ethnic composition of Saladin's army is a difficult one and the sources are largely reticent about it. In Usama ibn Munqidh's autobiography references to the ethnic origin of individuals and groups are common. But other criteria for expressing collective identity are no less important. For example, people are referred to according to a geographical criterion as Khurasanians without any indication of their ethnic origin. Military specialization serves as a powerful criterion for group identification. Knights are referred to as *fursan*, and their ethnic identity, be they Kurds or Arabs, is of secondary importance only. In the same vein Usama speaks of a group of Armenian archers stressing, in this case, the congruity between ethnic identity and military specialization. The Khurasanians mentioned by him are always sappers. Humphreys, who deals with this issue in a more dispassionate way than Ayalon, reaches the conclusion that the Kurds were a minority in the Ayyubid army.⁴⁷ Given the present stage of our knowledge this conclusion must be accepted. Nonetheless, it is more an educated guess from the sources than a firmly documented conclusion.

II. Ayalon's opinion regarding the relative importance of military slaves under Saladin and the Ayyubids has evolved with time. In his early writings Ayalon expressed the view that *mamluks* were not, until the rule of Salih Ayyub, a decisive factor in the Ayyubid period.⁴⁸ However, his later writings are permeated by a belief in the linear development of *mamluk* institutions from the eighth century to the time of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (13th-15th centuries). According to Ayalon, during these centuries both the institution of military slavery and the military role

⁴⁶ Y. Lev, "Fatimid Policy Toward Damascus (358/968-386/996). Military, Political and Social Aspects", *JSAI*, III(1981-1982), 175.

⁴⁷ Usama ibn Munqidh, 67, 73, 83, 84, 85, 95-6, 106, 128 (Arabic), 96, 102-3, 124-5, 136, 150 (English); Humphreys, "The Emergence", 45(1977), 89.

⁴⁸ See, "Studies", 465.

of the Turks became more and more predominant in the Muslim world and the Ayyubid period is no exception.⁴⁹ Ayalon's views cannot be accepted without reservations. First of all, our knowledge of the institution of military slavery prior to the establishment of the Mamluk Sultanate is very limited. The most important text is by Nizam al-Mulk. In his view, the successful training of military slaves requires discipline, a long period of time and slow promotion.⁵⁰ But in reality these rules were not always observed. Compromises were made with regard to the length of the training period and its rigor.⁵¹ Secondly, military slavery was not a uniform institution that developed in a simple linear manner. It had a checkered history and assumed many different forms. Thus, in some cases (Aghlabid Tunisia and pre-Fatimid and Fatimid Egypt), this institution which is usually associated with Turks and mounted archers was used to procure and train Blacks which fought as infantry.

Surprisingly, the only contemporary twelfth-century description of the institution of military slavery is provided by William of Tyre. Although this text remains neglected, his observations are most valuable. According to William of Tyre, the institution of military slavery utilized three sources of manpower: young prisoners-of-war, slaves bought in the slave-markets and the offspring of slave-mothers. As an outsider, William of Tyre had no knowledge of the lives of slaves during the period of their training. He says only that they were trained in the art of war and adult *mamluks* received remuneration and large possessions, according to their merits. The military role of the *mamluks* was to protect their master during battle. Victory, says William of Tyre, depended largely on the military performance of the *mamluks*.⁵² William of Tyre's account of Muslim military slavery betrays his interest in Arabic and knowledge of Islam and what he says is corroborated by Arabic sources. For instance, the incorporation of young prisoners-of-war in the institution of military slavery is mentioned in relation to the Fatimid period while the reference to the large possessions given to mili-

⁴⁹ See, his "From Ayyubids to Mamluks", *REI*, (1981), 44; "The Auxiliary Forces of the Mamluk Sultanate", *Der Islam*, 65(1988), 37.

⁵⁰ Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, translated into English by H. Darke (London, 1960), 106-8.

⁵¹ Lev, *State*, 101-2.

⁵² See, II, 431.

tary slaves can be understood as meaning *iqta'*. The comparison between the text of Nizam al-Mulk and William of Tyre is very revealing. Nizam al-Mulk explains the principles according to which the institution of military slavery was supposed to operate while William of Tyre describes the way it actually did operate.

In many ways, the period of Saladin's rule was not conducive to a flourishing of the institution of military slavery. Some of the conditions necessary for its proper functioning such as reliable sources for the supply of slaves and economic prosperity were lacking. Saladin himself spent most of his time on the battlefield, and his personal involvement in the supervision and breeding of his *mamluks* could not have been great. In fact, the location in Damascus, Cairo or elsewhere of the installations associated with the *mamluk* institution—such as the training barracks (*hujra*)—remains unknown. It seems that only the *halqa* can be described with any confidence as a unit composed of Saladin's military slaves. The *halqa* served as Saladin's bodyguard and its existence is attested to from a very early period of Saladin's rule (1174 and 1177). The composition of the *halqa*, at that time, is unknown. One of the first commanders of the *halqa* was a former Fatimid eunuch, Masrur, who attained the rank (or title) of emir.⁵³ The *halqa* was Saladin's private corps. For instance, during the protracted battle for Acre, the *halqa* stayed with Saladin during the winter months when other contingents had returned with their leaders to their home territories. When the army took up battle formation, the *halqa* occupied the centre from which usually Saladin commanded the army. However, on other occasions, the *halqa* was treated like any other military unit. It performed the task of advance-guard (*yazk*) in rotation with other units of the army.⁵⁴ In any case, explicit references to a sizeable body (several hundreds at least) of Saladin's military slaves come from a very late stage in his rule; the siege of Jaffa (end of July 1192). Their performance was poor and their behavior aroused the anger of the Kurds.⁵⁵ Undoubtedly, through-

⁵³ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, 216.

⁵⁴ Ibn Shaddad, 147, 152, 155. The *halqa* is referred to as the *khawwas al-sultan*, meaning chosen special troops, see 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 324. For the *halqa* of Saladin and other Ayyubid rulers, see Eddé, "Quelques", 161-8, esp., 166.

⁵⁵ Lyons and Jackson, 356, 358. Military slaves (*mamluk*) are referred to several times in Ibn Muqaffa's description of the battle for Acre, see 86, 90-1, 94 (Arabic), 146, 154 (English). At one point the military slaves are referred to as *al-mamluk al-Salahiyya wa-'l-Asadiyya* and at another as *al-mamluk al-Asadiyya*. Little, if anything, can be deduced from these allusions.

out his rule Saladin, in spite of the unpropitious conditions, cultivated a force of military slaves. In 585/1189-1190, for instance, the death of a commander of his military slaves is recorded.⁵⁶ These military slaves apparently constituted the corps of *Nasiriyya*. In 587/1191-1192, a person referred to as *naqib* (meaning head/commander) of *al-jandariyya al-Nasiriyya* escaped from the siege of Acre together with a number of veteran emirs of the *Asadiyya* corps. The *Nasiriyya* are referred to as military slaves (*mamlūk*) of Saladin.⁵⁷ A rivalry between the *Asadi* emirs, originally the military slaves of Shirkuh, and the new emerging corps of the *Nasiriyya* existed and was exploited by al-ʿAdil following the death of Saladin.⁵⁸

In his discussion of the supposed predominance of Turkish *mamluks* in Saladin's time and the Ayyubid period in general, Ayalon regards references in the sources to Turks as meaning *mamluks*. But, as is borne out by Ibn Mammati's statement, this is not so. There were Turkish military slaves as well as Turkish free-born troops—Turkmen (Ghuzz). Humphreys' conclusion that the military society of Saladin's period and that of the Ayyubids in general was composed largely of free-born socio-military groups is fully justified.⁵⁹ Important light is shed on the issue at question by Eddé's recent study of the emirs of Aleppo between 1183-1260 based on a sample of 122 biographies. First of all, her study gives attention to the social complexities of the issue under discussion. Ethnic differences between Kurds and Turks with the concomitant social tensions and strife between these two groups were a permanent feature during the period discussed by Eddé. However, on certain occasions, the behavior of the emirs was influenced by political considerations rather than by ethnic loyalties. Among the Turkish emirs we must distinguish clearly between military slaves and freedmen and free-born people. Furthermore, the class of

⁵⁶ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 149.

⁵⁷ ʿImad al-Din, *Fath*, 344; Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 187. For the term *jandar* in the meaning of guard, see Cl. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, (London, 1968), 223, 231; Eddé, "Quelques", 172, 174; S. Elbeheiry, *Les institutions de l'Égypte au temps de ayyubides*, vol. I, *L'organisation de l'armée et les institutions militaires*, Ph. D. dissertation, (University of Paris IV, 1971), 26-45; Rabbat, *The Citadel*, 102.

⁵⁸ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 229. For other military slaves and emirs of Shirkuh, see Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 61, 130; and for military slaves and emirs of Saladin, see, III, 151.

⁵⁹ Humphreys, "Emergence", 45(1977), 89-92.

emirs raised through the institution of military slavery was not composed exclusively of Turks. There were also Armenian emirs of slave origin.⁶⁰ Eddé's conclusions are not directly applicable to Saladin's period, but they do show that the issue is a complex one and should not be reduced to a dichotomy of Turks versus Kurds.

c. *The Administration of the Army*

In the Fatimid period the Office of the Army and Salaries was responsible for the administration of the army. As its title suggests, this office was in charge of two quite separate spheres of responsibilities; the army and the payment of salaries to all other employees of the state from the vizier at the top down to the servants of the palace. The main administrative task of this office in as far as the army was concerned was to maintain and update the central military register. It included information about the overall number of troops, their equipment and welfare.⁶¹ Matters concerning *iqta'* were the responsibility of other offices. The allocation of the grants of *iqta'* was the responsibility of the Office of the Chamber/Council while the Office of the *Iqta'* supervised the actual administration of the fiefs. The Office of the Chamber was the most important Fatimid office: it kept records and data on every aspect of state activity.⁶²

The most important change introduced in the period of Saladin was the assignment of all agricultural land in Egypt as *iqta'* for the army. Maqrizi does not say that Saladin was the first to introduce military *iqta'* to Egypt; he only says that Saladin expanded the system. The existence of military *iqta'* in Fatimid Egypt is well known and attested to by a variety of sources.⁶³ The consequences

⁶⁰ See, her "Kurdes et Turcs", in *War and Society*, 225-36.

⁶¹ Ibn Tuwayr, *Nuzhat al-Muqlatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*, (ed) A. F. Sayyid (Beirut, 1992), 82-5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 74-5, 86.

⁶³ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 156. Rabie has translated Maqrizi's statement into English but he draw an incorrect conclusion by saying: "Maqrizi implies that it was Saladin who introduced the military *iqta'* system to Egypt". See, 26. The Fatimid military *iqta'* is discussed by Cl. Cahen in his "L'administration financière de l'armée fatimide d'après al-Makhzumi", *JESHO*, 15(1972), 163-82. Further evidence is adduced by Lev, *State*, 125-7. Some key texts have been translated into English

of this change for the life of the Egyptian fellah must not be exaggerated. It could hardly have worsened his lot and there is no connection between military *iqta'* and slave armies.⁶⁴ The Ayyubid system of military *iqta'* in Egypt has been studied by Cahen, Hassanien Rabie, Richard S. Cooper and more recently Michael Brett and Sato Tsugitaka, so that only a short summary of its main features is needed here. In contrast to the Fatimid period, in Ayyubid times the holder of the *iqta'* (*muqta'*) did not pay the tithe. The revenues of the *iqta'* were calculated according to the annual average income (*'ibra*) generated by the fief, and paid in a monetary unit of account (*dinar jayshi*). The emirs, according to the value of their *iqta'*, were obliged to maintain a number of soldiers.⁶⁵

In the Zengid *iqta'* system, as practiced in Nur al-Din's Syria, wide-ranging administrative authority was entrusted to the *iqta'* holder. This characteristic feature was preserved under the Ayyubids as well. For example, in an account from 572/1176-1177, 'Imad al-Din describes Shams al-Din ibn 'Abd al-Malik as the man in charge (*mutawalli*) of Ba'labakk who held it as an *iqta'*. He was also the manager of its affairs and the *mutahakkim* of its finances.⁶⁶ According to a report of Maqrizi from 577/1181-1182, an emir who received the Fayyum as *iqta' al-khassa* was also appointed as the governor of the region.⁶⁷ The term *mutawalli* had also a military connotation meaning a regional military commander.⁶⁸ In the Ayyubid system of *iqta'* in Egypt, grants of *iqta' al-khassa* constituted a special category. The holders of this type of *iqta'* were mostly mem-

by M. Brett. See, his "The Origins of the Mamluk Military System in the Fatimid Period", in *Egypt and Syria*, 39-53. The Ayyubid *iqta'* is discussed in great detail by Tsugitaka. See, Ch. 3.

⁶⁴ K. Morimoto believes that the supposed introduction of military *iqta'* to Egypt by Saladin reduced the free fellah of the Fatimid period to a serf. See, his *The Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Early Islamic Period*, (Kyoto. 1981), 262. Some connection between military *iqta'* and military slavery is implied by Brett in his, "The Origins". However, black and white military slaves and installations for training military slaves existed in Fatimid Egypt prior to the emergence of the military *iqta'* at the beginning of the eleventh century. Nor did the spread of the military *iqta'* under Saladin herald an increased use of military slaves.

⁶⁵ Rabie, 33, 35, 36-7, 39; R. S. Cooper, *Ibn Mammati's Rules for Ministers: Translation with Commentary of the Qawanin al-Dawanin*, Ph. D. dissertation, (University of California, Berkeley, 1973), 7-8.

⁶⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 669; Tsugitaka, 55.

⁶⁷ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 95. For *iqta' al-khassa*, see Tsugitaka, 49, 68-9.

⁶⁸ For instance, in 574/1178-1179, the term *mutawalli* is used when referring to the commander of the army of Hama, see Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 5.

bers of Saladin's family and they were also entitled to collect non-agricultural taxes. In any case, with the full militarization of the *iqta'* in Egypt, the salary department was separated from the Office of the Army which assumed responsibility for the *iqta'* as well as other aspects concerning the army.⁶⁹

Saladin himself was the holder of an *iqta'*. He maintained his regular troops (*askar*) and military slaves from revenues derived from these lands. The reliance on *iqta'* as the chief method for paying the army exemplifies the confederate nature of Saladin's state. It is true that Saladin, as the Sultan and Commander in Chief, had full control of the troops brought to campaigns and wars by other holders of *iqta'* among the people of the military class—members of the Ayyubid family and emirs. However, Saladin experienced many difficulties in keeping his army campaigning during the winter. Usually at the end of the campaigning season Saladin granted the emirs permission to leave (*dustur*).⁷⁰ Only under exceptional circumstances, such as heavy pressure by Saladin or the hope for substantial reward, would have allowed the campaigning season to be extended into the winter.

⁶⁹ Rabie, 39, 42.

⁷⁰ Ibn Shaddad, 118, and 60, 84, 94, 96, 146, 151-2, 204-5, 210.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NAVY

a. *The Fatimid Naval Inheritance*

According to various estimates, in the second half of the twelfth century the Fatimid navy comprised between 75 or 80, or even 100 galleys, and twenty transport vessels of two types: *hammalat* and *musattahat*. How many of these ships were operational is unknown. Following the conquest of Bilbays by the Crusaders, a Fatimid flotilla of twenty galleys and ten *harraqat/harrariq* (ships from which Greek fire was hurled) is mentioned as operating on the Nile.¹ However, if we take our sources at face value, then at the time that Saladin became Fatimid vizier no navy existed in Egypt. The ships of the Fatimid navy had been destroyed in November 1168, when Fustat was set on fire by Shawar. However, it is quite possible that some ships of the former Fatimid navy survived the burning of Fustat intact, and there are no indications that the naval workshop at the palace or the arsenal at Maqs were damaged by the fire.

Although Fustat was an inland town it served as the main base for the Fatimid navy. The capital was well connected through a network of inland waterways with Alexandria and Damietta. Therefore the navy, which was protected in Fustat from the enemy raids to which coastal towns were exposed, could reach the Mediterranean quite easily. Traditionally in Muslim Egypt, the main arsenals had been located in Fustat and later in Cairo. In 54/673-674, the Arab conquerors of Egypt built an arsenal on Jazira, the island on the Nile lying between Fustat and Jiza, on the west bank of the river. Following the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, a new arsenal was set up at Maqs, the port which served Cairo—the town built by the new rulers for themselves.² For most of the Fatimid period the arsenal on Jazira was used for ceremonial purposes connected with the navy. From the second decade of the twelfth century the construction of warships was moved to the arsenal in

¹ Lev, *State*, 115.

² Maqrizi quotes two accounts, the first one by Ibn Abi Tayy who credits al-Mu'izz with the building of the arsenal, and the second by Musabbihi, who says that it was established by al-'Aziz, al-Mu'izz's successor and the second Fatimid ruler of Egypt. See, *Khitat*, III, 196, 317.

Fustat.³ At Maqs, in addition to warships, the government also built two types of ship intended for use on the Nile. One type was designed for shipping firewood and grain from the grain-producing regions in Upper and Lower Egypt to the state granaries in the capital. The other type was a processional barge intended for the use of the Fatimid ruler and other state dignitaries.⁴ Boats for use on the Nile were also built by the private sector in other places in Egypt.⁵ Another important naval installation in the capital was the workshop for manufacturing equipment for the fleet which was adjacent to the complex of Fatimid palaces in Cairo.⁶

We are poorly informed about the existence and activities of arsenals in Fatimid territories outside Egypt. The Persian traveller, Nasir-i Khusrau, who visited Egypt and Fatimid Palestine in the late 1040's, mentions Haifa as a place where seagoing ships of the *judi* type were built.⁷ Perhaps, at those times, Mount Carmel was still covered by forests, otherwise the timber could have been procured from the relatively close forests of the Lebanon. Ibn al-Tuwayr (d. 1220) and authors of the Mamluk period (which undoubtedly rely on him), in their overviews of Fatimid naval history, say that squadrons of the Fatimid navy anchored in Alexandria and Damietta and in both ports there were active arsenals.⁸ Thus it is quite possible that in 1168 some ships of the Fatimid navy were stationed in both ports and thus were saved from the upheavals that befell the capital. During the whole period of

³ Ibn Muyassar, 93; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 320.

⁴ Ibn Furat, IV, pt. 1, 149. The boats designated for the use of the Fatimid ruler and state dignitaries are referred to as *'ushari* and *daymas* (pl. *dawamis*). Two descriptions of Fatimid royal boats are available; one by Nasir-i Khusrau (see, 51) and another by 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (beginning of the 13th century) in his *The Eastern Key*, facsimile edition with English translation by K. H. Zand and J. A. and I. E. Videan (London, 1964), 187-8.

⁵ Nasir-i Khusrau, 40.

⁶ Ibn al-Tuwayr, 141-2; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, II, 311; cf. Rabie, 123.

⁷ Nasir-i Khusrau, 19. According to H. Kindermann, ships of this type had one deck. See, *Schiff im Arabischen*, (Zwickau, 1934), 16.

⁸ Ibn al-Tuwayr, 95; Ibn Mammati, 340; Qalqashandi, III, 519; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 313. M. Lombard's statement (in his *Espaces et réseaux du Haut Moyen Âge*, [Paris, 1972], 111) about the existence of eight arsenals in medieval Egypt must be qualified. First of all, one must distinguish between small shipyards, such as Salihyya in which boats for sailing the Nile were built, and the main arsenals in the capital. Secondly, the three arsenals in the capital mentioned by Lombard were operating in different periods and not simultaneously.

Saladin's rule in Egypt the capital continued to serve as the main base for the navy.⁹

b. *Saladin and the Egyptian Mediterranean Towns*

From the outset of Saladin's rule in Egypt, the defence of the Mediterranean coast posed an acute problem. The coast was devastated by the wars associated with the Crusades, but Damietta and Alexandria were still viable towns that had to be protected. Both towns were attacked by Christian forces during the early years of Saladin's rule in Egypt. On 27 October 1169, a Byzantine fleet in conjunction with land forces of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem converged on Damietta. According to William of Tyre, the Byzantine fleet included 150 galleys and 60 special ships adapted for use in the amphibious landing of cavalry on beaches (Arabic: *tarida* pl. *tara'id*, *tarrada*; Latin: pl. *taride*). The war fleet was accompanied by ten to twenty heavy transport ships, *dromones*, loaded with siege engines and supplies. The besieging forces employed against Damietta a variety of siege engines, but the siege failed due to a delay in military actions against the town following the landing, and the deep mistrust between the Byzantines and the Crusaders which came out into the open during the siege. Severe winter storms aggravated the situation of the besieging forces, tilting the balance of power on the battleground in favor of the Muslims. Qadi al-Fadil and Ibn Shaddad have exaggerated in their accounts the strength of the Byzantine fleet. Nonetheless, the expedition against Damietta demonstrated the vast naval resources that Byzantium commanded.¹⁰

The increasing size and capacity of ships built in the twelfth century and the wide use of ships from which cavalry could landed

⁹ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 118.

¹⁰ Ibn Shaddad, 41-2; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 457, 458-9 (quoting Ibn Shaddad and 'Imad al-Din); William of Tyre, II, 361-9. For the Byzantine perspective of these events, and a description of the Byzantine fleet, see Choniates, 191-6. The word *dromon* signified a Byzantine war galley, but it acquired a wider use meaning battleship. See, Frederick M. Hocker, "Late Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Galleys and Fleets"; John H. Pryor, "From Dromon to Galea: Mediterranean Bireme Galleys AD 500-1300", both in *The Age of the Galley*, (ed) R. Gardiner (London, 1995), 94-5; 102, 103, respectively. In the account by Choniates *dromon* stands for a heavy transport ship.

on beaches posed a serious threat to the rulers of Egypt who tried to protect their coastal towns.¹¹ The obvious response was to improve the fortifications of the towns on the Mediterranean littoral. In Shaʿban 566/April-May 1171, Saladin ordered the strengthening of the fortifications of Alexandria.¹² Twelfth-century Alexandria was situated several kilometers from the Nile, and an elaborate system of water channels was built to provide the town with drinking water. It had two ports which were located along a narrow stretch of land defended on its seaward-side by a tower.¹³ We do not know how far the works ordered in 566/1170 had been completed at the time of the Sicilian attack on the town. On 26 Dhu 'l-Hijja 569/27 July 1174, the port of Alexandria was attacked by the Normans of Sicily. Sicilian galleys slipped into the port under oar-power. The aim of the attack was to gain control of the port and forestall a possible intervention by the Egyptian navy against the landing of cavalry on the beaches. The Sicilian fleet included 200 galleys and 36 *tarrada* ships from which 1,500 cavalry were disembarked. Supplies, siege engines and troops were carried on 46 transport ships. Arabic sources put the overall strength of the force that besieged Alexandria at 50,000 men, among whom were 30,000 soldiers, the rest being sailors (each galley had a crew of 150), operators of siege engines and others. Although these numbers are inflated, the Sicilian fleet was undoubtedly a large one and brought a great quantity of equipment. The besieging forces built siege engines and bombarded the town with catapults which shot black stones brought from Sicily especially for that purpose. However, the defenders in a successful sally from the beleaguered town destroyed the siege engines, thus dashing the hopes of the Normans for a quick victory. Eventually, on 1 Muharram 570/2 August 1174, the siege was discontinued.¹⁴

¹¹ The data about the coastal towns at the time of Saladin are derived from the works of the late Maqrizi. Unfortunately, geographers more contemporary with the events such as Yaqut and Idrisi do not supply information of any use for the present study. The history of transportation of horses in the Mediterranean for military purposes in this period is examined by J. H. Pryor. See, "The Transportation of Horses by Sea During the Era of the Crusades: Eighth Century to 1285 A. D.", *MM*, 68(1982), 9-19.

¹² Al-Bundari, 109; Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 486 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

¹³ William of Tyre, II, 336. For medieval Alexandria, see M. Rodziewicz, "Alexandria and District of Mareotis", *Graeco-Arabica*, II(1983), 205-6, 208.

¹⁴ Al-Bundari, 170-1 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil's letter to Damascus); Abu Shama,

The failure of the Normans in Alexandria did not deter them from attacking other coastal towns in Egypt. Their preferred target was the town of Tinnis which suffered repeated attacks. In 548/1153-1154, the first recorded attack on the town took place. Tinnis was attacked again in 549/1154-1155, in 571/1175-1176, and in 573/1177-1178 the town was conquered by a Sicilian squadron, composed of forty galleys. The raiders set the town on fire and took much booty and many prisoners. The presence of warships in Tinnis was of little help to the defenders of the town. At the time of the Norman attack, the commander of the fleet was away from his ships and found himself fighting the attackers on land. In 576/1180-1181, a naval raid on Tinnis was launched from Ascalon indicating that it was an initiative of the Crusaders. But the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem was short of naval resources, and the attacking squadron was composed of only ten ships from which Greek fire was hurled. It ended in failure.¹⁵

The need to continue fortification work in the coastal towns was very obvious to Saladin. Such work was carried out in 572/1176-1177 at Alexandria and later in 577/1181-1182 at Damietta and Tinnis.¹⁶ In Tinnis, a citadel was built and the walls were improved. However, in sharp contrast to the supposed extent of these works, the sum spent is surprisingly low: 3,000 *dinars* only.¹⁷ Ap-

I, pt.2, 598-600 (quoting 'Imad al-Din and Qadi al-Fadil's above-mentioned letter). The information supplied by Arabic sources is confirmed by the anonymous Old French translation of William of Tyre known as *L'estoire de Eracles empereur et la conquete de la terre d'Oulremer*. However, the details which appear in *Eracles* are not derived from William of Tyre. On this subject, see John H. Pryor, "The Eracles and William of Tyre: An Interim Report", in *The Horns of Hattin*, (ed) B. Z. Kedar (Jerusalem, 1992), 270-94, esp., 290. I owe this reference to the kindness of Pryor. Historians of Norman Sicily see the attack on Alexandria in the context of cooperation between the Normans and the Crusaders in conjunction with an alleged plot in Egypt to overthrow Saladin. This perception of these events is determined by the tendentious reports of Qadi al-Fadil quoted by latter historians. These fragments of Arabic sources are well known in their French translation, which have appeared in the volume of Oriental historians of RHC. See, D. Abulafia, "The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean", *Anglo Norman Studies*, VII, reprinted in his, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean 1100-1400*, (London, 1987), 45, esp., n.107; D. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, (Cambridge, 1993), 279.

¹⁵ Ibn al-Qalanisi, 331; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 291-2; *Itti'az*, III, 207; cf. A. S. Ehrenkreutz, "The Place of Saladin in the Naval History of the Mediterranean Sea in the Middle Ages", *JAOS* 75(1955), 104-5.

¹⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 689 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

¹⁷ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 292. The town of Tinnis was built on an island in a large

parently, the town was no longer viable and the repeated naval attacks contributed toward its decline. Even the local Bedouins became a danger. They harassed ships on the Lake of Tinnis and attempts to fight them with ships hurling Greek fire failed. A decade later, in 588/1192-1193, Tinnis was officially abandoned. Its population was evacuated to Damietta and it ceased to exist as a town, becoming a military outpost only.¹⁸ In contrast with Tinnis, vast sums of money were spent in 577/1181-1182 on the fortification of Damietta. It seems that the town had recovered from the epidemics that had swept through it in 545-546/1150-1152.¹⁹ The walls of Damietta were improved and a garrison was stationed in two defensive towers between which a heavy chain was installed. The towers and the chain were designed to prevent the entrance of enemy ships from the sea to the mouth of the Nile. The town was surrounded by a trench, and the orchards in its vicinity were destroyed. Apparently, the aim was to prevent a potential enemy from using the trees as a source of timber for the construction of siege engines, as happened during the siege of Alexandria in 1167 by Shawar and the Crusaders.²⁰ However, the sums quoted as the total expenditure spent on these works—one million *dinars*—seems too high and quite improbable.²¹

c. *The Creation of the Office of the Navy*

In 572/1176-1177, Saladin went on a tour to Damietta and Alexandria. While visiting Damietta, he inspected 1,000 prisoners captured on a naval raid.²² This is the first report of any naval activity by the Egyptian fleet dating from the time of Saladin's rule in Egypt. The origin of the ships that were involved in this raid

lagoon, which received water from the Nile and the sea. See, Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, (Cairo, 1906), I, 419-22. On the other side of this lagoon, known as Buhayrat Tinnis, lay the town of Damietta. See, G. Cornu, *Atlas du monde arabo-islamique à l'époque classique*, (Leiden, 1985), map X.

¹⁸ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 95, 98; *Khitat*, I, 347.

¹⁹ Abu Shama, I, pt.1, 207 (quoting Ibn al-Qalanisi).

²⁰ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, I, 347.

²¹ *Ibid*, I, 347; *Suluk*, 96-7, 98-9. Yaqut explains that the town of Damietta was spread out between the Nile and the sea. The Nile entered the sea south of the town, and the mouth of the river was protected by two towers with a chain between them. See, *Buldan*, IV, 85.

²² Al-Bundari, 241; Abu Shama, 'Uyun, II, 36.

is obscure. Were they remnants of the former Fatimid navy or new ships which had already been constructed during the rule of Saladin? According to 'Imad al-Din, Saladin during his visit to Alexandria ordered the construction of warships (*ta'mir al-ustul*).²³ Generally authors such as Qadi al-Fadil and 'Imad al-Din say very little about naval affairs. Surprisingly, Ibn Abi Tayy is a source of detailed information on Saladin's naval policy in 572/1176-1177. However, the evaluation of his report is problematic. He is the last historian whom one might expect to be interested in the naval history of Egypt, and his information about Fatimid naval history is particularly unreliable. Whatever the case, Ibn Abi Tayy says that the fleet in Alexandria had fallen into disrepair and that Saladin ordered the building of new warships. It would seem that Saladin had a coherent naval policy and even paid attention to the details of his naval program. For example, he took measures to ensure a supply of timber and the recruitment of skilled craftsmen needed for the construction of the ships. The manpower for the navy was mobilized from rural areas, and local authorities were instructed to cooperate. One of Saladin's officers was appointed as commander of the fleet and was assigned a special *iqta'*. Once built, the ships were armed, equipped and manned. However, Saladin adopted a very cautious policy; the ships that became operational were ordered to remain in the port.²⁴ Both the progress and the full extent of Saladin's naval program are vague. Certainly one of the major problems was the procurement of timber. The Fatimid-Ayyubid administrator, Ibn Mammati, deplores the destruction of the forests of Upper Egypt which were assigned for construction of the ships. He mentions that these forests were carefully managed but local governors and fief-holders overexploited them.²⁵

In contrast to Ibn Abi Tayy, who reports on Saladin's naval policy in his record of the year 572/1176-1177, Maqrizi refers to this under the years 577/1181-1182 and 587/1191-1192. According to him, the Office of the Navy was set up in 577/1181-1182. If this was indeed so, it means that in that year Saladin adopted an overall

²³ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 689 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

²⁴ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 689-90 (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy); *Uyun*, II, 32.

²⁵ For English translation of Ibn Mammati's text, see Cooper, 288-9; Lombard, 130-1.

naval policy aimed at strengthening both the coastal towns and the navy. Several sources of revenue were allocated for the needs of the Office of the Navy. Among these were income derived from the region of the Fayyum and the mining of natron (which at that time amounted to 8,000 *dinars*), and the endowment (*habs*) of Juyushi.²⁶ This foundation was a pious endowment set up by Badr al-Jamali in favor of his descendants and included a number of rural properties. In order to divert the incomes generated by the *habs* al-Juyushi for the use of the navy the approval of the jurists was sought. In fact, this step completed the dismemberment of the Fatimid state and the appropriation of the wealth of its former ruling class for the benefit of the new elite and the needs of the Ayyubid regime.²⁷ In 587/1191-1192, responsibility for naval affairs was entrusted to al-ʿAdil, Saladin's brother, and the financial resources available for the navy were enlarged. A sum of 50,000 *dinars* was allocated to the navy from the revenues obtained from the alms-tax. It is unclear whether this was meant to be a permanent increase in the budget of the Office of the Navy or merely an *ad hoc* step. Saladin's actions in that year could have been a response to the demands posed by the bitter battle for Acre. In this protracted struggle the navy played an important role and Saladin wanted to appoint a person he could trust as responsible for the office dealing with the navy. This might also explain the need to enlarge the navy's budget. Whatever Saladin's intentions were, al-ʿAdil did not busy himself with the day-to-day running of the Office of the Navy. He appointed as the head of the office Ibn Shakir, a top-ranking administrator.²⁸

d. Saladin's Navy in Combat

Successful naval raids are the sole aspect of maritime history reasonably well attested by the sources. The interest of historians in naval warfare sprang from propagandistic concerns. Successful raids by the Egyptian navy on Christian shipping in the Eastern Mediterranean were presented as the embodiment of the Holy War.

²⁶ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 97.

²⁷ Ibn Mammāṭi, 336-9, esp., 339, followed by Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 210, 211, 315; cf. Gibb, *The Life of Saladin*, 20; Rabie, 86.

²⁸ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 134-5; *Khitat*, IV, 205-6.

Indeed, some of these raids resulted in great numbers of captives creating an impression of spectacular victories over the enemy. The identification of naval activity with Holy War goes back to the Fatimid period. Authors of the Fatimid-Ayyubid period, in their descriptions of the Fatimid state, identify the Office of the Holy War with the Office of the Navy.²⁹

In 572/1176-1177, as mentioned earlier, Saladin while in Damietta inspected prisoners captured by the navy. As a matter of fact, in that year the fleets of both Damietta and Alexandria were engaged in naval raids.³⁰ But successful naval raids were few and sporadic. In 575/1179-1180, the Egyptian navy achieved an impressive success. It launched a raid on Acre, a bustling town with a busy port, described as the Constantinople of the Crusaders. Qadi al-Fadil claims that a number of Christian ships were seized.³¹ In the same year also two other Christian ships referred to as *batsha* were captured and 1,000 prisoners were brought to Egypt.³² The term *batsha* is usually understood as meaning a big ship with two masts. In 577/1181-1182, a Christian *batsha* which had been on her way to the Levant was wrecked off Damietta. According to Arabic sources, it carried 2,500 passengers of whom 1,690 were captured alive. But these figures seems to be highly exaggerated.³³ In other cases the number of people captured was much lower. In 578/1182-1183, the Egyptian navy seized two Christian ships. On the first occasion 400 people were captured on board a *batsha* which was sailing from Constantinople.³⁴ The second incident involved a *batsha* which was on her way to Acre carrying timber for the construction of galleys and a team of shipwrights of whom 70 people were taken prisoner.³⁵ This re-

²⁹ Ibn Tuwayr, 94-5, followed by Ibn Furat, IV, pt.1, 149.

³⁰ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 692-3 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

³¹ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 14.

³² Al-Bundari, 330. In his *Barq* while describing these events, 'Imad al-Din makes an unclear allusion to a naval raid carried out by the Egyptian fleet against the Christian population of an unspecified island. See, MS Oxford, Bruce 11, f.136B.

³³ Ibn Wasil, II, 114; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 101. My reservation follows a comment made by Pryor.

³⁴ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 32 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil's letter to Baghdad); Ibn Wasil, II, 114.

³⁵ Ibn Wasil, II, 131 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil's letter to Saladin). When describing these events, 'Imad al-Din again makes an unclear reference to some unspecified islands supposedly raided by the Egyptian fleet. See, 'Imad al-Din, *Barq*, (ed) Sesen, V, 26.

port shows, if further evidence was needed, that naval resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Muslim Syria and Egypt as well as in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, were scarce and had to be supplemented by imports. A year later, a *batsha* which was sailing from the Levant was seized and 375 people were captured. The Muslim ships were on the high sea for nine days and returned with captives and spoils to Damietta.³⁶ How many ships took part in these raids is not mentioned in the sources. But Saladin could muster quite a large war fleet. For instance, William of Tyre says that in 1182, 30 galleys joined Saladin's ground forces for a three-day abortive siege of Beirut.³⁷

Parallel with the naval and land ventures undertaken by Saladin in the battle for Acre (see next sub-section), naval raids which were not directly connected with this war took place. In 586/1190-1191, Saladin's galleys went to attack Christian ships in their ports. In the battles that ensued some Christian galleys were destroyed by nafta bombs (*qawarir*), but Muslim galleys were also lost.³⁸ A number of raids were carried out by unidentified Christians who had allied themselves with Saladin; they used small boats (*barakis*) and were quite successful. On one occasion they attacked a large warship (*harraqa*) which was accompanied by a boat and captured merchants and goods.³⁹ In two other incidents three Christian boats and about seventy-five people were seized. This group of raiders also attacked Cyprus where they captured a group of people whom they sold as slaves in Latakiyya.⁴⁰ Other naval raids were conducted from Beirut. The most spectacular ended with the capture of five Christian *tarrada* ships including female and male passengers, goods and forty horses.⁴¹

Saladin's naval activity also extended to the Red Sea. Commercial traffic that passed through the Red Sea was of immense eco-

³⁶ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 47, 48 (quoting 'Imad al-Din and Qadi al-Fadil); Ibn Wasil, II, 139-40; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 104.

³⁷ William of Tyre, II, 476, 477; Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 29 (quoting 'Imad al-Din). The numbers given by William of Tyre are high; Arabic sources give lower figures: 15 galleys for the period following the victory of Hittin and 31 galleys and *harraqat* in 580/1184-1185. See, Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 112-3, 118.

³⁸ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 319.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 316. He describes these people as those who were granted *aman*, safety, by Saladin.

⁴⁰ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 317-8, 328. A leading person among these raiders converted to Islam.

⁴¹ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 325, 330.

conomic importance to medieval Egypt. Qalqashandi says that the Fatimids kept a war fleet of three to five ships in the Red Sea to protect the Karimi merchants who engaged in trade with India.⁴² Even if this information is taken at face value, considering the length of the Red Sea and the limited range of the galleys, the presence of such a small squadron had little practical meaning. Furthermore, information garnered from chronicles dealing with the Fatimid period does not support Qalqashandi's statement. The Fatimids did not maintain a navy in the Red Sea. They dealt with occasional naval threats to sea-borne trade in the region as they appeared by *ad hoc* measures.⁴³ Fatimid policy was not a result of neglect or weakness. It epitomizes the fact that in the period under discussion no strong link existed between sea power and sea-borne trade. For example, mid-twelfth-century rulers of Aden did not maintain a navy to protect their port town whose prosperity, if not very existence, was so dependent on sea-borne commerce.⁴⁴ John H. Pryor points out that in the twelfth century even Venice, Genoa and Pisa "assembled war fleets from their commercial shipping when the need arose". In his view, only three Mediterranean states; the Fatimids, Byzantium and Norman Sicily "did maintain anything like a professional, permanent war fleet in the twelfth century".⁴⁵

Saladin's naval policy in the Red Sea was in line with that of the Fatimids. There are no indications that he kept a permanent war fleet in the region. Small war fleets were created for specific tasks. For instance, in 577/1181-1182, five ships capable of throwing Greek fire and a contingent of archers were dispatched to Yemen. These ships were built at the arsenal in Fustat and somehow transported to the Red Sea. The naval raid launched by Reynald of Chatillon in 578/1182-1183 in the Red Sea was dealt with locally by the hasty construction of warships on the shores of the Red Sea and by pursuit of the Frankish raiders.⁴⁶

⁴² See, III, 520.

⁴³ Lev, *State*, 105.

⁴⁴ This fact is clearly borne out by the material published by S. D. Goitein. See, his "Two Eyewitness Reports on the Attack of the King of Kish (Qais) Against Aden", *BSOAS*, 16(1954), 247-57, esp., 253.

⁴⁵ See his *Geography, Technology, and War. Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean 649-1571*, (Cambridge, 1988), 124.

⁴⁶ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 97-8, 99, 102-3. 'Imad al-Din's narrative of these event in *Barq* consists of his own account of what happened and citations from Qadi

e. *Saladin's Navy and the Siege of Acre*

Saladin captured Acre following his victory at Hittin. But from September 1189 until 12 July 1191 the town was besieged by Christian land and naval forces determined to retake it. This protracted conflict offers an unusual opportunity to examine the performance of Saladin's navy over a long period of time in a struggle which had far-reaching military and moral consequences for both sides. Prior to the struggle for Acre Saladin's navy was involved only twice in what might be called combined operations. The first time was at Beirut in 1182, and the second in 1187, when a squadron of ten galleys assisted Saladin's army at the siege of Tyre. However, the fleet failed miserably; ships were abandoned by their crews and five galleys were captured by the Christians in a night assault.⁴⁷

During the battle for Acre both Saladin and the Crusaders possessed important ports at a short distance from the scene of the fighting; the Crusaders controlled Tyre, and Saladin held Beirut conquered, like Acre, in the wake of his victory at Hittin. It should be emphasized that the main engagements in the battle for Acre were fought on land. Saladin conducted two parallel military efforts: one aimed at defeating the Crusader ground forces, and the other focused on providing Acre with supplies and reinforcements by sea. However, his army was unable to break through the Christian besieging forces in order to link up with the garrison in the beleaguered town and the ships which entered Acre found themselves stranded in the port.

One of the most crucial naval events in the battle for Acre occurred in its early stages. On 16 Dhu 'l-Qa'da 585/26 December 1189, fifty galleys (*shinis*) which arrived from Egypt entered Acre. According to 'Imad al-Din, Saladin, from the beginning of the

al-Fadil's letters to Baghdad describing this incident. Both reports have been translated into English and discussed with the help of additional sources by G. LaViere Leiser in his "The Crusader Raid in the Red Sea 578/1182-3", *JARCE* 14(1977), 87-99. For a wider discussion of the Red Sea and the security considerations of the Crusaders see, J. Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, (Oxford, 1980), 471-83, esp., 480-3.

⁴⁷ Ibn Shaddad, 84; 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 79-81; Abu Shama (Beirut), II, 119 (quoting 'Imad al-Din); Ibn Wasil, II, 243-5; cf. D. Ayalon, "The Mamluks and Naval Power", in his *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt (1250-1517)*, (London, 1977), 4.

Frankish siege on Acre, had written to Egypt ordering the preparation of a navy. The commander of the fleet which entered Acre was Husam al-Din Lu'Lu', an accomplished naval officer.⁴⁸ On Saladin's orders further naval preparations were carried out in Egypt. These culminated in the arrival, on 8 Jumada I 586/13 June 1190, of a second fleet from Egypt at Acre. This fleet entered Acre following a naval battle in which each side lost a ship. 'Imad al-Din also mentions the capture of six Christian sailing ships (*butash* pl. of *batsha*) and the enslavement of women and high-ranking military leaders who were travelling on them.⁴⁹

Saladin also urged the governor of Beirut, 'Izz al-Din Usama, to send supplies to Acre. On 21 Rajab 586/24 August 1190, a sailing ship from Beirut entered Acre. This particular ship was originally a Christian *batsha* that had been captured on a raid and kept unused in Beirut. She was loaded with provisions and manned by a Christian and Muslim crew and had on board a fighting team composed of archers and nafta throwers. The ship was disguised as a Christian vessel by displaying crosses and pigs on the decks.⁵⁰ About three weeks later (14 Sha'ban 586/16 September 1190) three other sailing ships arrived in Acre. They had been dispatched from Alexandria following Saladin's constant demands for provisions for the besieged town.⁵¹ Supplies continued to arrive in Acre even during the winter. On 2 Dhu 'l-Hijja 586/11 January 1191, seven sailing ships arrived from Egypt at Acre with grain.⁵² In sharp contrast to the extensive naval effort to reinforce and supply Acre by sea, which was carried out during 586/1190-1191, in 587/1191-1192 no Muslim ships arrived at Acre. A single attempt to ship supplies to the besieged town took place on 16 Jumada I 587/11

⁴⁸ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 224; Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 148 (quoting 'Imad al-Din). Ibn Shaddad, 122-3, says that with the navy ships also arrived from coastal towns carrying provisions. The late Ibn Wasil says that the warships (*qit'a min al-ustul*) which entered Acre brought 10,000 men. See, II, 305. A figure which, as pointed out to me by Pryor, is quite reasonable. See, also Lyons and Jackson, 307-8. According to Latin sources, the term *qit'a* refers to triremes (Latin: *cattus* pl. *catti*). See, Pryor, "From Dromon to Galea", 108.

⁴⁹ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 257-8. Apparently this fleet was composed of warships. 'Imad al-Din mentions in his description galleys, ships from which Greek Fire was hurled and *shalandiyyat*. According to Ibn Mammati, *shalandiyyat* were decked galleys. See, 340. The Arabic term is derived from the Greek *chelandon*.

⁵⁰ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 282-3; Ibn Shaddad, 135.

⁵¹ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 284; Ibn Shaddad, 138.

⁵² 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 315.

June 1191 and ended in a failure. A sailing ship from Beirut with provisions and about seven hundred fighting men (*muqatila*) was sunk by Christian naval forces off Acre.⁵³ From 'Imad al-Din's description of the battle for Acre it emerges that Saladin was very aware of and concerned with the naval aspects of the war. On the one hand, he urged his men in Egypt and Beirut to send supplies by sea to Acre. On the other hand, there were serious misgivings in Saladin's camp in regard to the ability of the Muslim naval forces. The most telling reflection of this pessimistic mood is 'Imad al-Din's reference to the Christian ships as "spreading like scorpions and venomous snakes" while "our ships cling to their ports". In a letter written in 585/1189-1190, to Yusuf ibn 'Abd al-Mu'nim, the Almohad ruler, Saladin admits that the Christians controlled the sea. He remarks that the losses which the Christian forces suffered at Acre were more than replenished by the reinforcements arriving from beyond the sea (meaning Europe). Saladin expressed his wish that the Muslim naval forces would perform as well as the land army. In general, he asked for naval support and implored 'Abd al-Mu'nim to send his navy against Sicily.⁵⁴

In spite of this realistic appreciation of his naval limitations, Saladin continued to dispatch his fleets to Acre. Taking into account the limited speed of the galleys and their restricted ability to remain at sea a watertight naval blockade was impossible. Active patrolling of the sea off a besieged town was not the norm. In many cases the galleys were beached on the shore and sent to sea in time of need.⁵⁵ These limitations inherent in operating medieval navies made it possible for Muslim fleets to reach Acre with supplies and reinforcements. The main value of the Christian naval blockade of Acre, which could not have been total, was in deterring and making difficult the attempts to re-supply Acre by sea. On the other hand, the attempts of the Christian naval forces to storm the port of Acre were unsuccessful. Entry to the

⁵³ *Ibid*, 337; Ibn Shaddad, 161-2.

⁵⁴ For 'Imad al-Din's remark, see Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 152; 'Uyun, II, 210. For Saladin's letter, see Qalqashandi, VI, 526-30. For a French translation, see M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, "Une lettre de Saladin au Calife almohade", in *Mélanges René Basset*, (Paris, 1925), II, 281-89. For the wider context of Saladin's relations with the Almohad rulers, see Möhring, *Saladin*, 192-209. The reason behind Saladin's request for actions against Sicily is not clear. The Norman Kingdom of Sicily was not involved in the battle for Acre.

⁵⁵ Lev, *State*, 117.

port was protected by the Tower of Flies which was situated at the end of a mole. The fighting for possession of this fortress was the key to holding Acre. In the course of this fighting the Muslim defenders made very successful use of Greek fire against the Christian ships, and on one occasion the galleys trapped in Acre sailed out to meet the enemy ships.⁵⁶

With the fall of Acre, Saladin lost a great number of galleys and transport ships. In fact, his navy ceased to exist. Therefore, during the later stages of the Third Crusade the whole brunt of the fighting fell on Saladin's ground forces and the problem of defending the coast became very acute. Saladin adopted a policy of deliberate destruction of those coastal towns which he was unable to defend, extending this policy to inland towns as well. Following the peace settlement which ended the Third Crusade, he strengthened the forts along the Mediterranean coast and manned them with fresh troops. Apparently, the aim was to create an early-warning system against sea-borne invasions which possessed some defensive capabilities as well.⁵⁷

f. The Wider Context of Saladin's Naval Activity

Most of Saladin's naval activities were conducted in conjunction with attempts to conquer or defend coastal towns. His naval efforts were not aimed at control of the sea or achieving naval supremacy. It is important to remember the illuminating remarks of John Guilmartin Jr. that fleets of galleys could not achieve control of the sea in the modern sense of the word. The capability of the galley as a warship was seriously restricted due to its limited

⁵⁶ 'Imad al-Din says that the Tower of the Flies was in the sea and was crucial to the defense of the port. See, *Fath*, 289; Ibn Shaddad, 138-9. For the port of Acre and its structure, see R. Gertwagen, "The Crusader Port of Acre: Layout and Problems of Maintenance", *Autour de la Première Croisade*, (ed) M. Balard (Paris, 1996), 553-81. In the twelfth century, the Tower of the Flies was much larger than it appears today and between it and another tower, now underwater, there was a chain protecting the entrance to the port.

⁵⁷ Saladin's policy of destroying the fortifications of coastal towns is referred to by Abu Shama. See, (Beirut), II, 157 (quoting 'Imad al-Din); *Uyun*, II, 212-3. For references to naval events during the last months of the siege on Acre, see Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 160-1, 162-3, 164, 184 (quoting Ibn Shaddad and 'Imad al-Din); *Uyun*, II, 249 (for the loss of the navy in Acre).

ability to remain at sea, its speed and its operational range. Naval warfare in the Mediterranean was characterized by sea-borne attacks on major ports and coastal towns. The attacks on Damietta and Alexandria exemplify this type of warfare. However, even in these combined operations the role of the navy was limited. The success of combined operations against coastal towns depended ultimately on the performance of the ground forces. Naval forces fighting on their own were ineffective in attempts to conquer or defend coastal towns. For instance, a Sicilian navy composed of 60 galleys and manned by 10,000 men was unable to prevent the fall of Jabala and Latakiyya to Saladin.⁵⁸ On the other hand, efforts to conquer Acre from the sea also failed. In line with a observation made by Matthew Bennett it can be said that mastery of the sea did not directly influence fighting on land.⁵⁹ In combined operations the role of the navy was twofold: first, to bring the ground forces and their equipment and supplies to the scene of the fighting and, secondly, to continue to supply the army engaged in a siege while preventing the enemy from providing help to the besieged town by the sea. However, the result of the siege was decided by the ability of the besieged town to defend itself and by the will and ability of central government to commit its naval and above all its ground forces to such type of warfare.

In order to evaluate Saladin's naval policy and its ultimate failure we must take a wider view of the naval situation between 1099 and the fall of Acre to the Crusaders in July 1191. In the first decade of the twelfth century, the Fatimids lost a number of towns along the Syrian-Palestine coast to the Crusaders and their Italian allies. Only in one case, the siege of Sidon in 1108, did the successful intervention of the Fatimid navy temporarily prevent the fall of a town. During the siege of Beirut in 1110, the Fatimid ships that entered the port found themselves trapped within it. The sailors took part in the defence of the town, but with the fall of the town to the Crusaders the fleet was lost too. The fall of Tripoli was due to a great extent to the vindictive Fatimid policy towards the *de facto* independent rulers of the town, the family of Banu 'Ammar.

But Fatimid failure was above all a failure of the Fatimid army

⁵⁸ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 142-3; Ibn Wasil, II, 258-9 (quoting Ibn Shaddad).

⁵⁹ Although his observation is made in a different context, it is valid for the period under discussion as well. See, his "Norman Naval Activity in the Mediterranean c.1060-1108", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15(1993), 41-58, esp., 54.

to offer effective resistance to the Crusaders. The repeated attempts to re-conquer Jaffa, during the summers of 1102, 1105 and 1123, exemplify this point. The same happened in 1153 in Ascalon. The Fatimid navy brought supplies to the town, but Fatimid ground forces which were dispatched to relieve the town remained immobilised in Egypt due to an internal power struggle in Cairo. On three occasions (at Jaffa in 1105 and 1123, and at Ascalon in 1153), the Fatimid navy performed better than the army. But the navy on its own, without the support of ground forces, achieved nothing. The Fatimid navy was small and mostly consisted of galleys; it included only twenty transport ships and its capability to ship supplies and reinforcements was limited. It was vastly outnumbered by the European fleets which operated in the Eastern Mediterranean in support of the Crusades. For this reasons the Fatimids were very hesitant to commit their navy when coastal towns were besieged by Crusaders who were supported by large naval forces (as happened at Acre in summer 1104, at Tripoli in summer 1109 and at Tyre in summer 1124).⁶⁰

Egypt's naval resources were restricted by comparison to those of the European Mediterranean nations. Data collected from the Geniza documents points to a lively trade in timber between Italian maritime cities (Amalfi, Genoa and Venice) and Fatimid Egypt in the twelfth century.⁶¹ There are many indications that during the eleventh century European nations became prominent in the sea-borne trade in the Mediterranean. European merchants were common callers at Muslim city ports and became important buyers of the goods traded there. On the other hand, the business trips made by North African and Near Eastern merchants to European ports were few and sporadic.⁶² Towards the end of the

⁶⁰ W. Hamblin, "The Fatimid Navy During the Early Crusades: 1099-1124", *The American Neptune*, XLVI(1986), 77-83; Lev, *State*, 108-9. For details on the exploits of the naval forces of Genoa, Pisa and Venice in the decade 1000-1010, see M. Balard, "Communes italiennes, pouvoirs et habitants des états Francs de Syrie-Palestine au XII^e siècle", in *Crusaders and Muslims*, 45-6.

⁶¹ Goitein, *Med.Soc.*, I, 46; S. M. Stern, "An Original Document from the Fatimid Chancery Concerning Italian Merchants", reprinted in his *Coins and Documents from the Medieval Middle East*, (London, 1986). For attempts of the Byzantines to prevent Venice (in early 970's) from supplying timber to the Muslims and the consequences it had for the internal politics of the town, see Lombard, 133-4.

⁶² Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 44-5, 211. Goitein refers to occasional trips by "Arabic-speaking traders", a definition which includes Jews and Muslims and in geographical terms means both North Africa and the Near East. In a later publica-

eleventh century, the European nations were able to translate with relative ease their preponderance in commercial shipping into military naval superiority. The contribution of European fleets, including that of the English, to the success of the First Crusade is widely recognized and has been recently the subject of a detailed study by John France.⁶³ In the first decade of the twelfth century, Italian fleets played a crucial role in the conquest of the coastal towns of Palestine and Syria. The Fatimid vizier and military-dictator, al-Afdal, retaliated against the Genoese merchants in Egypt by arresting them.⁶⁴ This act reveals his weakness and frustration. Unable to check the Italians at sea, al-Afdal endangered Egyptian commercial interests. Following the conquest of the Palestine-Syrian coast, large European fleets were engaged in bringing pilgrims to the Holy Land. In 1102, hundreds of European ships transporting pilgrims are said to have anchored at Jaffa.⁶⁵ The establishment of the Crusader states in the Levant brought about further naval developments in Europe, especially in Italy, enhancing and extending the naval preponderance achieved in the eleventh century.⁶⁶

The navy rebuilt by Saladin faced the same problems as that of the Fatimids: European superiority in numbers and the loss of ports along the coast of Palestine and Syria. The inherent deficiencies of galleys as warships combined with the geographical and other naval factors discussed recently by Pryor seriously restricted the raiding potential of Saladin's navy operating from Egypt. Pryor argues that the use of amphoras (instead of barrels) for carrying water seriously reduced the operational range of Fatimid galleys. The shipping lanes used by the European fleets on their way to the Levant were to all intents and purposes beyond the range of

tion, Goitein says that only one letter from the eleventh century testifies to an "Arabic-speaking Jewish merchant doing business in a Christian port of Europe" (meaning Amalfi). Another letter is from the thirteenth century and refers to a business trip to Genoa and Marseilles. See his *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, (Princeton, 1973), 8.

⁶³ See, his *Victory in the East*, 98, 209-20. For cautious remarks on Italian naval superiority at the time of the First Crusade, see Pryor, *Geography*, 30.

⁶⁴ Goitein, *Med.Soc.*, I, 45.

⁶⁵ J. Richard, "Le transport outre-mer des croisés et des pèlerins", in *Maritime Aspects of Migration*, (ed) K. Friedland (Wien, 1989), 33-4.

⁶⁶ See, for example, the remarks of M. Balard, "Les transports des occidentaux vers les colonies du Levant au Moyen Age", in *Maritime Aspects of Migration*, 5.

warships operating from Alexandria and Damietta.⁶⁷ Only with the conquest of Beirut, Jabala and Latakiyya were new opportunities opened for raiding to Saladin's navy.

But the main question that must be asked concerns the role of the navy in the failure to conquer Beirut and Tyre and to hold Acre. In the case of Beirut, Saladin gave up the siege when he realized, after three days of heavy fighting, that he was unable to take the town by assault. The defeat of Saladin's fleet off Tyre was particularly humiliating but it had little effect on the failure of the siege, which was abandoned because Muslim ground forces failed to make any headway and, with the onset of winter, Saladin had to take into account the request of his emirs to raise the siege.⁶⁸ The evaluation of the role of the navy in the battle for Acre is more complex. First of all, Saladin's naval effort was very considerable and on the whole quite successful. The fleets, large and small, which were dispatched to Acre managed to bring in supplies and reinforcements, which on several occasions proved crucial to the ability of the defenders to continue resisting the Crusaders.⁶⁹ The fall of Acre was due to a combination of two factors: Saladin's inability to defeat the Crusaders on land and his inability to match the naval resources of the European nations involved in the Third Crusade. Taking into account the limited naval resources of Egypt, Saladin built and assembled an impressive number of ships for dispatch to Acre. But the trapping of his ships in Acre created an impossible situation. Each ship that reached Acre safely was a ship lost and which had to be replaced. This eventually exhausted Saladin's restricted naval resources.

Saladin's heavy investment in the fortification of the coastal towns provided them with basic defensive capabilities. A similar approach was adopted by other Mediterranean powers, which were faced with the problem of defending their coastal regions and towns. For example, in the first half of the tenth century, Southern Italy

⁶⁷ For a full discussion of the water problem, winds and sea currents, see his *Geography*, 80-6, 116-22.

⁶⁸ Saladin's naval defeat at Tyre was the result of an attempt to maintain the blockade on the port. For this reason his ships were at sea off the port at night. See 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 80.

⁶⁹ This is clearly evidenced by Ambrose's account. See *Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart*, translated into English by M. J. Hubert and annotated by J. L. LaMonte (N. Y., 1976), (reprint), esp., 156, 189 and also 147-8, 171-2; cf R. Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century*, (Oxford, 1992), 218.

was vulnerable to Fatimid raids launched from Sicily and Tunisia. In this case the geographical realities put the Fatimids in a good position to raid the area while the Byzantines had to invest great effort in defending the region. The Byzantines coped with this problem by keeping a small naval presence in the Adriatic sea, especially in Dalmatia and at Dyrrachium, and by fortification of the coastal towns of Calabria and Apulia.⁷⁰ The destruction of the fortifications of the coastal towns (and occasionally of inland towns as well) is another aspect of the same policy. A town that cannot be defended must be rendered useless to the enemy.⁷¹

Our sources shed little light on the types of ships and on naval warfare in general. The most common term used in Arabic sources when referring to a sailing ship is *batsha*. This term is used in two distinctive ways: with and without the adjective huge/big. This means that there were *batsha* of ordinary size but some of these ships were especially big. Impressive three-masted sailing ships are depicted on glazed ceramic bowls from the Balearic islands in the early eleventh century,⁷² but how big these sailing ships really were is not entirely clear.⁷³ The term *batsha* in Arabic sources refers to both Christian and Muslim ships. It might indicate that the outward appearance of Christian and Muslim ships referred to as *batshas* was very similar, or that the term referred to ships of the same type.⁷⁴ Apparently there was no difference in the outward appear-

⁷⁰ J. Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy Towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", in *Byzantium and the West*, (ed) J. D. Howard-Johnston (Amsterdam, 1988), 71, 72-4, 77.

⁷¹ When Acre was conquered by Saladin in the aftermath of Hittin, there was a division of opinion among his emirs as to what to do with it. 'Imad al-Din says that the walls were badly damaged and most of the town was without walls at all. Some advised Saladin to demolish the town and to keep Acre as a fortified outpost only. Others held the opinion that Acre is the key to control of the sea and coast. Saladin decided to fortify Acre and the task was delegated to Baha al-Din Qaraqush, who earlier had been responsible for the construction of the walls of Cairo and Fustat. See, 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 117-8; cf: Lyons and Jackson, 285.

⁷² John. H. Pryor and S. Bellabarba, "The Medieval Muslim Ships of the Pisan Bacini", *MM* 76(1991), 99-113; D. Nicolle, "Shipping in Islamic Art: Seventh through Sixteenth Century AD", *The American Neptune* 172, 11a-b, 173 para.11.

⁷³ For a summary of current knowledge about the medieval Mediterranean sailing ship, see John H. Pryor, "The Mediterranean Round Ship", in *Cogs, Caravels and Galleons*, (ed) R. Gardiner (London, 1993), 59-75.

⁷⁴ The most revealing account is by the contemporary Usama ibn Munqidh, who describes the journey of his family from Egypt to Syria. They arrived in Damietta on board a special '*ushari*' put at their disposal by the Fatimid vizier, and sailed to Syria on board a Frankish (i.e. Christian) *batsha*. See, 34 (Arabic).

ance of Muslim and Christian warships. Ibn al-Qalanisi's description of a Fatimid raid in 550/1155-1156 is very revealing in this respect. On that occasion the officer in charge of the raid was chosen from the naval personnel (*muqaddam min al-bahriyya*), and he selected for the mission sailors (*rajul bahr*) who spoke the language of the Franks. The crews of the warships were dressed in Frankish attire. The raid was very successful; off Tyre the raiders seized and burnt a big Christian ship and on their way back they captured ships with pilgrims.⁷⁵ It would have been quite futile to put such effort into disguising the crews if the Fatimid warships were markedly different from the Christian ones.

In the sources transport ships are referred to by several terms. Saladin, in a letter describing the attack of the Norman fleet on Alexandria, mentions six ships designated as *sufun* which carried siege and war engines, big timber logs and other supplies. Ships of the *hammala* type were apparently smaller carrying men and supplies.⁷⁶ According to Ibn Mammati, *hammala* ships were used for shipping grain. Another type of transport ship mentioned occasionally in the sources is the *musattah*. Such a ship with 500 people on board was attacked by the Egyptian navy shortly after the re-capture of Acre by the Crusaders. Ibn Mammati has very little to say about this type of ship. According to him, the term *musattah* should be understood literally, meaning a flat ship.⁷⁷

When confronted by galleys and ships hurling Greek fire, the sailing ships, especially the big *batsha*, could, as long as they enjoyed favorable winds, defend themselves successfully. The difficulties of warships in capturing large transport ships are nicely

No less instructive is Ambrose's account of the Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart. According to him, the Crusaders had difficulties in recognizing as Muslim vessels the ships, which they encountered at sea. On the first occasion, a big three-masted ship off the Syrian coast misled them. On another occasion, they had difficulties in deciding the identity of a fleet which approached Acre. See, 110-1, 148. We have here a further indication of what Pryor and Bellabarba describe as a "cross-cultural fertilization in naval architecture in the Mediterranean". See, their "The Muslim Medieval Ships", 105.

⁷⁵ The type of ships the Fatimids used on these raids is unknown. Ibn al-Qalanisi uses the expression *al-marakib al-ustuliyya*, which can be translated as ships of the navy. The term *ustul* pl. *asatil* refers to navy, meaning, apparently, galleys. See, 332.

⁷⁶ Abu Shama, I, pt.2, 599 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

⁷⁷ Ibn Mammati, 340. For an English translation of Ibn Mammati's short account dealing with the navy and arsenals, see Cooper, 285-6.

illustrated in the account given by a contemporary twelfth-century Byzantine chronicler. In the winter of 1171, a group of Venetians escaped in a three-masted ship of great size from Constantinople. The fugitive ship was too swift for the pursuing galleys and ships throwing Greek fire. In any case, the chronicler remarks that any attempt to board the escaping ship would have been impossible due to its height.⁷⁸ Big transport ships may have been used for military purposes as well. For example, the English Crusaders overcame a big three-masted Muslim ship which was manned by 800 warriors armed with bows and arbalests and equipped with Greek fire.⁷⁹

Our sources supply no information about the construction of warships or other related matters. Timber was scarce in Egypt, but some trees suitable for shipbuilding were grown in Upper Egypt. The price of lumber was very high and could reach fifty *dinars* a plank.⁸⁰ It is quite clear that ships hurling Greek fire could have been easily and quickly built and equipped. This is borne out by the accounts dealing with the Frankish raid into the Red Sea and the Muslim response to it. Both sides made use of fire as a weapon.⁸¹ Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the ships which had been assembled on the shores of the Red Sea were *harraqat*. In general, the Muslims made quite extensive use of Greek fire in naval and land warfare. However how the Greek fire was hurled from Muslim ships is not always clearly stated. Both 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad mention *qawarir* indicating that Greek fire was thrown from ships by nafta throwers in the form of bombs.⁸² But it does not mean that syphons for discharging Greek fire were not used.⁸³

Medieval observers followed by modern scholars have been dis-

⁷⁸ Choniates, 97-8.

⁷⁹ Ambroise, 111-4.

⁸⁰ 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi, 35.

⁸¹ Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 139; Leiser, "The Crusader Raid", 92

⁸² 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 319; Ibn Shaddad, 143.

⁸³ For Greek fire in naval warfare, see V. Christides, "New Light on Navigation and Naval Warfare in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and Indian Ocean (6th-14th Centuries)", *Nubica*, III(1994), 5-25; esp., 24. Syphons are clearly mentioned in the Arabic sources quoted by Christides. Types of Greek fire, including the sort used in naval warfare, are discussed in a military treatise composed for Saladin. See, Cl. Cahen, "Un traite d'armurerie composé pour Saladin", *BEO*, 12(1947-1948), 123 (text), 146 (French tran.). In this text the type of Greek fire used in naval warfare is described as spreading (literally walking) on the sea. The spread of Greek fire on water is also referred to in the

appointed by the performance of Saladin's navy. 'Imad al-Din explained the naval failure during the siege on Tyre (1187) by the poor quality of the seamen. He said that the people who were in charge in Egypt (*nuwwab Misr*, a vague expression) showed little interest in the navy and underpaid naval personnel. They drafted to the navy an ignorant bunch, and these turned out to be disobedient when discipline was necessary.⁸⁴ 'Imad al-Din's remarks on the poor quality of naval personnel reflect a long-standing problem not just the realities of Saladin's period. In the Fatimid period, in comparison to the military and other employees of the state, naval personnel was seriously underpaid. It seems that the pay of the seamen deteriorated even further during the last years of Fatimid rule. Saladin tried to improve the situation. In 567/1171-1172, apparently after the overthrow of the Fatimid dynasty, he increased by 20% the value of the "naval *dinar*", a unit of account according to which the seamen were paid.⁸⁵ However, as is born out by Ibn Abi Tayy's account and implicitly supported by 'Imad al-Din, the manpower for Saladin's navy was recruited among the Egyptian fellahin-peasants. The operation of a galley, and certainly of fleets composed of galleys, required experienced crews. Rowing was a highly specialized job which demanded discipline and team work.⁸⁶ One wonders how, if ever, the fellahin impressed into naval service became skilled seamen.⁸⁷ The poor quality of naval personnel might explain the behavior of the fleets trapped

poetry of Ibn al-Hani, a tenth-century Fatimid poet. See V. Christides, *The Conquest of Crete by the Arabs (ca. 824). A Turning Point in the Struggle Between Byzantium and Islam*, (Athens, 1984), 65. In order to achieve this effect the Greek fire must have been discharged massively from a throwing device. Naphta bombs hurled by naphta throwers could not have created such an effect. For the use of Greek fire by the Muslim defenders of Acre, see Rogers, 221-2, 223.

⁸⁴ 'Imad al-Din, *Fath*, 81.

⁸⁵ For the Fatimid period, see Lev, *State*, 120. For Saladin's policy, see Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 66; cf: Ehrenkreutz, "The Place of Saladin", 105, n. 51; Rabie, 47-8.

⁸⁶ How the teams of rowers were organized is vaguely indicated by our sources. There was a certain hierarchy among the oarsmen. A Byzantine text refers to chief oarsman and second oarsman. See, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio* text edited by G. Moravcsik, English translation by R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington, D. C., 1967), I, 251, 253.

⁸⁷ In contrast to the fellahin, people which lived from the sea were skillful mariners. In this respect, there is a very revealing incident that took place in 1185 when a rebel fleet composed of small swift boats manned by fishermen experienced in rowing confronted the imperial galleys. The galleys were due to their length very slow in turning and found it difficult to fight against the rebel

in Acre. The commander of the fleet of galleys which entered Acre in December 1189 was Husam al-Din Lu'lu', an experienced naval officer. He commanded the Egyptian fleet in the Red Sea in 578/1182-1183. But, on that occasion his crews were composed of sailors of North African origin.⁸⁸ We do not know what kind of sailors manned his fleet in 1189. Lu'lu himself was a former Fatimid officer of Armenian extraction. His biographers describe in detail his victory in the Red Sea, but are reticent about his role in the battle for Acre. How he survived the fall of the town is not mentioned, but he died in Cairo on 13 Safar 598/13 November 1201. All of his biographers emphasize that he devoted his wealth to charity. Maqrizi says that he quit the military service but when this happened is not specified.⁸⁹ Further information on naval officers is scarce. The two senior officers captured with five of their ships off Tyre in 1187 were of Maghribi and Persian origin, 'Abd al-Salam al-Maghribi and Badran al-Farsi.⁹⁰ It is difficult to make sense of their titles/ranks; al-Maghribi is described as *ra'is* and *muqaddam* while al-Farsi as *mutawalli*. Another naval officer mentioned in the annals is Ya'qub of Aleppo. He was the *muqaddam* of the *batsha* which failed to penetrate the Christian naval blockade off Acre.⁹¹

In trying to revive the navy in Egypt, Saladin was faced with a formidable task and the odds were against him. Irrespective of his ultimate naval failure, his inability to defeat the Third Crusade was due to a disappointing performance by his army rather than by the failure of his naval forces.

fleet. In addition, due to some unspecified difficulties (perhaps adverse wind conditions), the imperial galleys were unable to use their devices for discharging Greek fire. See, Choniates 209. The man-power of Muslim navies is a neglected topic of study. The notable exception is A. M. Fahmy's discussion of the recruitment of sailors for naval service in early Muslim Egypt. See his *Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean*, (Cairo, 1950), 98-106.

⁸⁸ Leiser, "The Crusaders Raid", 92. There is a hint of the presence of Maghribi sailors in the Egyptian navy from 575/1179-1180. See Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 14 (quoting Qadi al-Fadil).

⁸⁹ Al-Mundhiri, II, 332-3; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, III, 138-8, gives a different date for his death; cf. Leiser, "The Crusader Raid", 92-3.

⁹⁰ Abu Shama, (Beirut), II, 119 (quoting 'Imad al-Din).

⁹¹ *Ibid*, II, 184-5 (quoting 'Imad al-Din). The term *ra'is* pl. *ru'asa'*, in a naval context, means the captain of a ship. The term *muqaddam* means officer but lacks precision while the term *mutawalli* was used in the Fatimid period for both heads of administrative offices and provincial military governors.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

a. *Fatimid Realities*

In comparison to the Muslim Middle East and North Africa the position of the non-Muslim communities in Fatimid Egypt was quite unique. Two factors might explain this situation: a) Egypt was only partially Islamized and b) the policies of the Fatimid regime. The Copts constituted a very large segment of the population and were distributed throughout the country while the Coptic Church was a powerful and rich institution. In the capital and Alexandria there were Jewish communities and other small communities and individual Jews lived in many other places. Fatimid policy toward non-Muslims was tolerant and, with the exception of al-Hakim's rule (996-1021), there were very few violent outbursts against non-Muslims. Even the wars of the Crusades had little impact on the position of the non-Muslim communities in Egypt. On the whole, during the Fatimid period Christians and Jews were employed in the administration and served as physicians at the court. It was possible for Christians and Jews to build churches and synagogues, and they were not obliged to wear the distinctive colors and dresses (*ghiyar*) imposed on non-Muslims by law and custom.

Another unusual aspect of Fatimid policy towards non-Muslims was the consent of Fatimid rulers to the immigration and settlement in the country of the Christian Armenians who were employed as soldiers. It is true that the beginning of this immigration took place under the rule of Badr al-Jamali and the Fatimid Imam al-Amir could do little about it. But nothing had changed following the fall of the Jamali family and an Armenian Christian military leader, Bahram, became the Fatimid vizier. However his rise provoked a violent local reaction which brought about his downfall (1137). Rather paradoxically, at about the same time that he was toppled, Christians from Palestine and Syria found refuge in Egypt escaping persecution in their homelands. Eventually a large population of these refugees settled permanently in Egypt. It is true that they were ordinary people with no military associations.¹ Nonetheless, at the time that Shirkuh became Fatimid vizier,

¹ Lucy-Anne Hunt, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Painting in Egypt of the Twelfth to mid-Thirteenth Centuries", *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 33(1985), 113, n.30.

Christian Armenians still served in the army. Armenian troops were stationed in Cairo and others lived outside the town.²

The position of non-Muslims at the Fatimid court surprised foreign visitors to Egypt including Fatimid sympathizers. Perhaps it is not just a coincidence that Nasir-i Khusrau mentions, in the account of his visit in Egypt (1047-1048), a Christian millionaire and a Jewish administrator. The Christian was a grain dealer and possessed immense stores of grain. Nasir-i Khusrau chose him as an example to illustrate the prosperity and security that the people of Egypt enjoyed under Fatimid rule. The Jewish administrator referred to was Abu Sa'd (in Jewish and Arabic sources Sa'd) al-Tustari, who was killed by the army in October 1047. Nasir-i Khusrau tells a tendentious version of those events stressing, on the one hand, that the army showed remorse for the crime it had committed (hardly likely to be true). And, on the other hand, that other members of the family continued to enjoy the protection of the Imam and retained their riches.³ Another visitor to the Fatimid court, the Fatimid propagandist in Shiraz, Mu'ayyad fi Din, met Abu Sa'd at the height of his power. Mu'ayyad vividly describes his meeting and relations with Abu Sa'd. He is rather surprised to find a Jew wielding such power, and he never fails to mention the fact that he is a Jew. According to Mu'ayyad's own testimony, Abu Sa'd was thrilled to see him and lavished on him money from the treasury promising Mu'ayyad to secure for him the patronage (*istina'*) of the Imam. However, Mu'ayyad deeply mistrusted Abu Sa'd's intentions toward him and disapproved of the power he held. Mu'ayyad mentions that the army killed Abu Sa'd and he says that it was a result of the machinations of the vizier, al-Fallahi, himself a converted Jew, who resented Abu Sa'd's influence and power.⁴

The leaders and soldiers of Nur al-Din's armies dispatched to Egypt considered these Fatimid realities as odd. Policies aimed

² Badr al-Jamali settled Christian Armenians in the Husayniyya quarter outside the walls of Cairo and allowed them to take over unused Jacobite churches. See, Ibn al-Muqaffa', II, part 3, 225-6 (Arabic), 355-6 (English). Maqrizi says, on the authority of Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (d. 1292), that 7,000 Armenian troops made up of infantry and cavalry settled there. See, *Khitat*, III, 33 cf: Mackenzie, 4-5. For Husayniyya in the Mamluk and later periods, see A. Raymond, *Le Caire*, (Paris, 1993), index.

³ See, 55-6, 58.

⁴ See, *Sirat al-Mu'ayyad fi 'l-Din*, (ed) M. K. Husayn (Cairo, 1949), 81-4.

against non-Muslims were high on Shirkuh's list of priorities. During the short period of his vizierate, he enacted a number of edicts against non-Muslims. There can be little doubt that to him the position they enjoyed seemed to be an anomaly to be corrected.

b. *Oppression and Persecutions*

I. Arab-Christian sources say that in the wake of Shawar's victory over the vizier Dirgham, troops of Nur al-Din's expeditionary force (referred to as Ghuzz and Kurds) began to maltreat Christians, Armenians, Blacks, Turks and the local population. These incidents cannot be regarded as persecutions of the non-Muslims. Nur al-Din's army behaved as an occupying force mistreating everyone. But in periods of instability and indiscriminate violence non-Muslim communities were especially vulnerable. Many churches in Cairo and its environs were destroyed, and the local population cooperated with the Ghuzz and Kurds in the destruction of churches.⁵ Such events took place in Jumada I 559/March-April 1164, and in 564/1168-1169.⁶ Four churches which belonged to the Melkite community were seized by the Ghuzz and Kurds. The buildings and the walls which surrounded the compounds were pulled down, and the looters took any timber that they found in the churches. The destruction of churches was not limited to the capital. In Jiza two churches were thoroughly ransacked by the Ghuzz and the local population. Churches were also destroyed in Upper Egypt at the towns of Qus and Asyut.⁷

Churches and especially monasteries lost the lands bestowed on them by the former Fatimid rulers. Several Fatimid Imams showed interest in monasteries by visiting them and granting them tracts of agricultural land as gifts. In 575/1179-1180, a survey of such lands was conducted. Altogether Christian institutions had 915 feddans of land belonging to this category. This land was unevenly distributed: 906 feddans were in Upper Egypt and only 9 feddans in Lower Egypt. The income derived from this land amounted to 2,923 *dinars* in cash and 4,824 *irdabbs* of grain.⁸ All

⁵ Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, part, 1, 52 (Arabic), 87-8 (English); Abu Salih, 96, 106.

⁶ Abu Salih, 89, 90, 91, 94-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 96-7, 174-5, 234, 235, 249.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

of this land was seized from the Church. The Ghuzz confiscated land which belonged to this category from monasteries in Jiza and Hulwan. In 1174, at Ashmunayn, an emir of Saladin converted a flourishing monastery into a mosque and settled in its grounds. A monastery which had enjoyed exemption from taxes during the Fatimid period was seized in Asyut.⁹

Some monasteries were big and prosperous landowners. For instance, the monastery seized at Ashmunayn owned twenty feddans of land granted to it by the former Fatimid rulers. It also operated a number of production installations including an oil-press, a mill and an oven. The monastery and its production complex were surrounded by a wall. Such prosperous monasteries were not exceptional. A monastery in Asyut had similar facilities; it also owned an orchard and grew vegetables. This particular monastery received money from contributions and payment of covenants. These two monasteries were not the richest ones. A monastery in the Fayyum owned land in several places; it cultivated palm-trees and was involved in the production of salt from an area of salt-marshes. A population of 130 monks lived in this monastery.¹⁰

II. Shirkuh, during the three short months of his period as vizier, inaugurated anti-*dhimmi* policies. He enforced the *ghiyar* regulations on non-Muslims. Arabic-Christian sources speak of a sweeping anti-*dhimmi* campaign at the beginning of Saladin's rule blaming Qadi al-Fadil for advising Saladin to prohibit the employment of Christians in the fiscal administration of the state.¹¹ In Rajab 567/February-March 1172, a group of non-Muslims was dismissed from their posts. However, non-Muslims employed by Saladin's emirs in the administration of their rural estates were not affected by

⁹ *Ibid.*, 183-6, 197-8, 248, 250.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹¹ Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, pt.2, 63-4 (Arabic), 106-7 (English). The late al-Nabulusi, who was an anti-*dhimmi* bigot, says that Saladin prohibited the appointment of Christians to *diwans* and provinces. See, his *Kitab Tadjrid Sayf al-Himma*, (ed) Cl. Cahen in his "Histoire Copte d'un cadî médiéval", *BIFAO*, LIX(1960), 146, 147. This statement can be interpreted as meaning that Christians were prevented from holding posts of authority as heads of administrative offices and fiscal governors. Even according to this source Saladin's policy was a selective one and did not amount to a general purge of non-Muslims from the administration. For Nabulusi and his anti-*dhimmi* attitudes and writings, see B. Catlos, "To Catch a Spy: The Case of Zayn al-Din and Ibn Dukhan", *Medieval Encounters*, 2(1996), 99-113.

this policy. The atmosphere in the capital must have been very tense; rumors spread about the possible expulsion of non-Muslims from the town and about the confiscation of their homes.¹² In addition to the enforcement of the *ghiyar* regulations, restrictions were imposed on worship. Crosses were removed from churches and the ringing of church bells was forbidden. Religious processions were prohibited and non-Muslims were obliged to ride on asses alone. Public consumption of wine was also forbidden.¹³

These policies caused a group of Christian clerks to convert to Islam. Perhaps the most famous case is that of the Mammati family of Copts whose origin was in Asyut. In the Fatimid period, members of the family served the state and attained great power. The father of the family, al-Muhadhdhab, was in state service at the time that Shirkuh became vizier, either in the Office of the Army or in the Office of the Iqta'. He used to appear in public without the obligatory *ghiyar* and Shirkuh had removed him from his post. Al-Muhadhdhab and his son, Asad, converted to Islam and kept their posts under the new masters.¹⁴ It said that Saladin was instrumental in the conversion to Islam of a Christian physician, al-Muwaffaq ibn al-Matron, whose father had also been a physician. Following his conversion, al-Muwaffaq continued to serve Saladin.¹⁵ Other anti-*dhimmi* edicts were proclaimed in 577/1181-1182. Non-Muslims were banned from practising medicine and the prohibition on their employment in the civil service was re-enacted including the ban on riding horses and mules.¹⁶ But conversion to Islam was not a prerequisite for employment by Saladin. A Jewish physician who had served the Fatimid rulers was employed by Saladin and was paid the high salary of 24 *dinars* a month. Other Jewish physicians were also employed by Saladin and members of the Ayyubid family. The most famous of the Jewish physicians of Saladin's period was Maimonides whose son, Abraham, followed him in the service of other Ayyubid rulers of Egypt. Maimonides, at the beginning of his career in Egypt, enjoyed the

¹² Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 68, 69.

¹³ Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, pt.2, 97-8 (Arabic), 164-5 (English).

¹⁴ Yaqut, *Udaba'*, V, 103-8; Ibn al-Qifti, I, 231-2. Safadi, IX, 20, 21-2. On the Mammati family in the later Ayyubid period, see Morray, 56-7.

¹⁵ Maqrizi, *Muqaffa*, II, 98-9.

¹⁶ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 100.

patronage and financial support of Qadi al-Fadil, who also helped other Jewish physicians.¹⁷

c. The Impact of Saladin's Policies

One can wonder what was the overall impact of these policies on the non-Muslim communities in Egypt? We can derive some insight by comparing the beginning of the Ayyubid rule with al-Hakim's persecutions of non-Muslims at the beginning of the eleventh century. As in the early Ayyubid period, al-Hakim's anti-*dhimmi* policies led to the conversion to Islam of senior Christian scribes and fiscal officials as well as of ordinary people.¹⁸ However, in both cases there are no indications that conversion of Christian administrators created a general trend to conversion or played any significant role in a more extensive Islamization. Ayyubid policies had a limited effect even on the high echelons of the non-Muslim communities. Non-Muslims continued to be employed in the state administration and by members of the Ayyubid family. Ayyubid emirs employed non-Muslims, especially Copts, in the administration of their rural estates, which they had acquired either through seizure or as an *iqta'*.¹⁹ The employment of non-Muslims by mem-

¹⁷ Safadi, XV, 127. For a number of Jewish physicians in the service of Saladin and other Ayyubids, see E. Ashtor, "Saladin and the Jews", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXVII(1956), 310-3; S. D. Goitein, *Palestine Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times*, (Jerusalem, 1980), 261-2, 270, 321-2 (in Hebrew). For Qadi al-Fadil's attitude to Jewish physicians, see B. Lewis, "Maimonides, Lionheart, and Saladin", *Eretz-Israel*, L. A. Mayer Memorial Volume, 7(1964), 70-6; M. Meyerhof, "Mediaeval Jewish Physicians in the Near East, from Arabic Sources", *Isis* 28(1938), 445, 447. For Abraham see, Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, IV, 476-7. In Ayyubid Syria and especially Egypt non-Muslim physicians continued to be employed and enjoyed high status. See, Anne-Marie Eddé, "Les médecins dans la société syrienne du VII^e/XIII^e siècle", *AI*, XXIX(1995), 92, 93. However, the employment of non-Muslim physicians by the Muslim ruling class was a special case. It had a long history in medieval Islam and physicians moved across political and confessional boundaries. See, for example, E. Kohlberg and B. Z. Kedar, "A Melkite Physician in Frankish Jerusalem and Ayyubid Damascus: Muwaffaq al-Din Ya'qub b. Siqlab", *AAS*, Studies in Memory of Eliyahu Ashtor, 22(1988), 113-27. But opposition to the employment of non-Muslim physicians became bitter and vocal, especially during the Mamluk period. See, M. Perlmann, "Notes on the Position of Jewish Physicians in Medieval Muslim Countries", *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2(1972), 315-9.

¹⁸ Y. Lev, "Persecutions and Conversion to Islam in Eleventh-Century Egypt", *AAS*, 22(1988), 82.

¹⁹ Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, pt.2, 98-9 (Arabic), 165-6 (English); For a Christian vizier of Sultan al-'Adil, see Safadi, IX, 22.

bers of the military class in the management of their properties and rural estates became an established practice that continued well into the Mamluk period. In fact the anti-*dhimmi* spasm of 1172 abated quickly. The need in 577/1181-1182 to proclaim new edicts similar to those of 564/1168-1169 shows that the situation returned to normal.

Following the reversion of al-Hakim's persecutions of non-Muslims, in the late 1020's, the *dhimmi* communities invested great effort in recovering their religious establishments; synagogues, churches, monasteries and pious endowments, which had been damaged during the years of oppression. The destruction inflicted on religious institutions had wider implications for the ability of non-Muslims to conduct their lives as communities. Synagogues, churches and monasteries were not merely houses of worship: they also served as focal points of communal life. The same happened in the 1160's and 1170's. Attempts to rebuild damaged churches and monasteries took place almost immediately after their destruction by Nur al-Din's expeditionary forces. For example, during al-'Adid's rule a church that had been burnt by the Ghuzz and Kurds, in the Hamra' district of Fustat, was restored.²⁰ In some cases, churches that had been destroyed in 559/1163-1164, were already rebuilt in 560/1164-1165.²¹ Other churches were rebuilt between 1172 and 1186, including those in Qus and Asyut.²² On the other hand, the small and feeble Melkite community was unable to re-claim and restore its destroyed churches in the Hamra' district.²³ But other churches in this area, destroyed either during Shawar's fire or deliberately, were re-built later.²⁴

A very special case was the Armenian Christian community in Egypt. Following Saladin's rise to power in Egypt, the Armenian Patriarch left Cairo for Jerusalem (23 Rabi I 568/13 November 1172), and Armenian churches and monasteries were closed. Other churches which had been given to the Armenians during the Fatimid period were reclaimed by their original owners, especially the Copts. However, even the Armenians tried to rebuild their

²⁰ Abu Salih, 106.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 91, 96.

²² *Ibid.*, 94-5, 106, 121; 113, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, 138 (see, also 95-6, 112-3); 234, 235, 249.

²³ *Ibid.*, 96-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-3, 119-22, 122-4, 125, 126-7.

churches. They were engaged in a long and bitter dispute with the Copts, and both parties tried to secure the goodwill of their new Ayyubid masters for their cause.²⁵ In Upper Egypt, an Armenian community and its churches continued to exist unaffected by the turmoil that had befallen the Armenians in Cairo. The origin of the Armenian settlement in Upper Egypt goes back to the 1130's, the period of the Fatimid Armenian Christian vizier, Bahram.²⁶

However, the Christian communities did suffer some permanent losses. For instance, the grants of land bestowed on Christian institutions by former Fatimid rulers were appropriated by the new regime. The same is true of churches and monasteries that had been converted to mosques and of lands endowed to churches and monasteries that had been seized by Saladin's troops.²⁷ Similar events took place during al-Hakim's persecutions; houses of worship were converted to mosques and the land endowed to them taken and divided as *iqta'* among the soldiers. In such cases the cessation and reversal of al-Hakim's persecutions had no effect on the new status of those buildings and lands. The non-Muslims lost them for ever.

The Christian communities were also affected by Saladin's allocation of *iqta'* to his emirs. Land distributed as *iqta'* also housed churches and monasteries and this was the case in both the environs of the capital and the countryside. Relations between the recipients of *iqta'* and the Christian institutions on their land varied greatly. For example, a Syrian jurist who had received the Basatin area on the outskirts of the capital as an *iqta'* left the churches there untouched. Upon his death, the new holder of this *iqta'* closed two churches there. Saladin's brother who bought land which included a church refrained from interfering with it.²⁸

Thus the persecutions of non-Muslims in the early period of Ayyubid rule in Egypt had some permanent effects for the *dhimmi* communities. Nonetheless these effects were local and contained.²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4, 6, 8, 10-1, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 255; Lev, *State*, 126.

²⁷ For such cases, see Abu Salih, 14, 247-8, 250.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3, 12, 141.

²⁹ For local effects of the persecutions, see Abu Salih, 162-3, 165, 168, 242, 256. For a systematic regional approach to Islamization, see M. Martin, "La Province d'Asmunayn: historique de sa configuration religieuse", *AI*, 23(1987), 1-28, esp. 23, where the stages of the process are discussed.

Even the Armenian community in Egypt survived the persecutions.³⁰ The Ayyubid rulers adhered to the basic parameters that determined the position of non-Muslims in medieval Islam³¹ and the implementation of the legal restrictions imposed on non-Muslims by them was slack.³² The persecutions by al-Hakim and the Ayyubids show that short periods of duress were not enough to bring about a massive Islamization. Only pressure from below combined with the determined policies of rulers from above, as happened in the Mamluk period brought about the almost complete Islamization of Egypt. The powerful and extensive presence of the Copts attracted, throughout the Ayyubid period, an ever more militant response from the Muslim religious class. But the deterioration of relations between Muslim society and the authorities and the non-Muslim communities took place only in the Mamluk period, first in Damascus and later in Egypt.³³

³⁰ For a continued Armenian presence in Egypt, see Abu Salih, 1-2, 13, 162-3, 255. For the continued importance of the Armenians in the Christian art of Ayyubid Egypt, see Hunt, 142, 144.

³¹ This is the view of Ashtor. See, 308-9. It can be corroborated by fresh evidence. See, G. Khan "A Document of Appointment of a Jewish Leader in Syria Issued by al-Malik al-Afdal 'Ali in 589 A.H./1193 A.D.", in Y. Ragib (ed), *Documents de l'Islam médiéval*, (Cairo-Paris, 1991), 97-116, esp., 99, ll, 3-18 (text), 102 (tran.), where the responsibilities and powers of the head of the Jewish community are enumerated.

³² E. Sivan, "Notes sur la situation des chrétiens à l'époque ayyubide", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, CLXII(1967), 121.

³³ The decade 1250-1260 and the period that followed marked a change in the relations between Christians and Muslims in Damascus. See, Pouzet, 328-34. For the Islamization of the Copts in the Mamluk period, see D. P. Little, "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahri Mamluks 692-755/1293-1354", *BSOAS*, 39(1976), 552-569.

CONCLUSIONS

I. Saladin was a man of his age: an age of constant warfare which saw the rise of ambitious military leaders to supreme power through the ranks. The very essence of civilized society is that it creates religion, culture and legal and political systems which curb violence. Thus the quest for power by individuals had to accord with the fundamental values of society, or had at least to be presented as such. In other words, power and the quest for it had to be legitimized, unless violence is to be revolutionary violence which seeks to re-shape the values of society and its institutions. But Saladin was not a revolutionary. Therefore his career must be examined within the framework of the established values of the Muslim society of his age. The need to see Saladin against the wider background of his period is also dictated by the character of our sources. Saladin's historian-admirers, especially Qadi al-Fadil and 'Imad al-Din, were towering persons in the cultural life of their times and they presented Saladin through the prism of their own system of values.

The best example of how the values of the historians who wrote about Saladin determine the presentation of Saladin and his deeds is the killing of Shawar. Shawar exemplifies the worst example of unrestrained behavior by any member of the military society of his age. Members of the civilian elite contemporary with Shawar—Ibn 'Asakir and the poets in Egypt and Syria—saw his killing as a fully justified deed. However, later, when Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad wrote their histories of Saladin, the passage of time diminished the role of Shawar's opportunism and mischief and what remained was the fact the Shirkuh had gained power by regicide. Saladin's historian-admirers re-wrote this incident and brought it into accord with their own system of values, in which there was no place for regicide.

The same entanglement of policies and their later presentations is evident in the accounts of the policies of Shirkuh and Saladin towards the Fatimid state and towards al-'Adid himself. The Ayyubids were dispatched to Egypt to benefit their master, Nur al-Din, by the conquest of the country or at least by gaining control of its resources. From Nur al-Din's point of view his intervention in Egypt went sour because of Shawar's treachery and more significantly

because the Ayyubids developed a taste for Egypt quite independent of their master. Ostensibly, the termination of Fatimid rule by Saladin poses no difficulties of historical presentation. Sunni Islam and Abbasid suzerainty prevailed over Isma'ili heresy. But the events were far more complex than that. Saladin, a man in the service of Nur al-Din, became the Fatimid vizier, a servant of an Isma'ili heretic. Therefore his determined policies to undermine Fatimid rule, the Battle of the Blacks, and, apparently, the killing of al-'Adid, had to be played down and even denied altogether. The manipulation of the accounts dealing with these policies was necessary in order to avoid presenting Saladin as an opportunist avid for power for himself and devoid of any moral restraint and scruple. What Saladin's historian-admirers could present without any difficulty were Saladin's policies against Ismailism. This aspect of Saladin's policies is treated as standing by itself and divorced from the wider context of his actions against the Fatimid state and dynasty. The overthrow of the Fatimids brought Saladin into direct conflict with Nur al-Din, an embarrassing point which is simply denied by 'Imad al-Din, but emphasized by the hostile Ibn al-Athir.

We should always be aware that Qadi al-Fadil and 'Imad al-Din who depict Saladin as blameless strive also to present themselves as people with integrity and scruples. 'Imad al-Din was in the service of Nur al-Din and later of Saladin, who deprived Nur al-Din's legitimate heirs of their patrimony. 'Imad al-Din feels no need to explain his shift of loyalties. He maintains that he already maintained good relations with the Ayyubids while he was in the service of Nur al-Din and he openly admires both Nur al-Din and Saladin. Qadi al-Fadil was in a more difficult position; he had been in the service of Shawar and the Fatimids, and had somehow to justify his shift in loyalties. We can regard Yaqut's account of the beginning of Qadi al-Fadil's career in the service of Saladin as an version sponsored by Qadi al-Fadil himself, or at least as a version attempting to portray him in a favorable light.

As a large number of scholars have already established—notably Emmanuel Sivan, Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, R. Stephen Humphreys, Malcom Cameron Lyons, D. E. P. Jackson and Hannes Möhring—the concept of Holy War was manipulated by rulers in the twelfth century for their political ends. They presented themselves as champions of the Holy War, a presentation supported, propa-

gated if not invented sometimes by members of the civilian elite. In this context Qadi al-Fadil rendered to Saladin a tremendous service: he presented Saladin's war against Nur al-Din's heirs as having an ulterior motive—Holy War and the conquest of Jerusalem.

II. Medieval warfare had its own rationale. For an agrarian pre-modern, pre-industrial society war was the main instrument for expansion and gaining wealth. Agricultural land and the control of the peasantry constituted the main sources of wealth. Towns with their trade and the urban economy were a second source of wealth. Both sources of wealth could be best acquired by wars of conquest. From an economic point of view wars against the Crusaders for the conquest of land and towns made perfect sense. These wars also accorded well with the religious and political values of Muslim society in the twelfth century. Wars of defense made sense only when the core territories of the kingdom, on which its very existence depended, were threatened by an enemy. Within these parameters Saladin's battle for Acre made no sense at all.

Following the conquest of Acre, there was a divergence of opinion among Saladin's advisors about what to do with the town. Some advocated the abandonment of the town while others pointed out to its strategic and economic value. Saladin chose to retain and fortify the town. Shortly afterwards Acre came under Christian siege. From that very moment, from Saladin's point of view, Acre instead of being a future asset turned into a liability. The wisest thing to have done was to have given it up immediately. Instead Saladin fought a long, costly and eventually disastrous war for control of the town. It cannot be argued that Saladin was dragged into this struggle by the dynamics of the war itself. During the winter the armies around Acre were much reduced and Saladin, had he so wished, could have evacuated the town and disengaged his forces from combat. It can be argued that Saladin fought the battle for Acre in order to preserve his reputation as a warrior of the Holy War. To put it differently, Saladin fell victim to his own—or more accurately Qadi al-Fadil's—propaganda. But this argument has its limitations. The length of the period that Saladin chose to face the challenge of the Third Crusade and the tremendous strain it put on his resources make this argument look rather shallow. Saladin could have given up Acre expecting Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad

al-Din and Ibn Shaddad to explain this as an necessity. Undoubtedly, at the beginning of the battle for Acre, Saladin was confident of his ability to win this war. But as the battle dragged on and the challenge of the Third Crusade intensified, Saladin's continuous war effort must be also seen as a reflection of his commitment to the ideology of Holy War.

Saladin was man of his age, and on the whole his policies lacked any originality. His religious policy, the building of law colleges and Sufi convents, his tax decrees and his policy toward the Holy Cities of Arabia were the policies of his former master, Nur al-Din. The same holds true of Saladin's military policy. The army that Saladin created in Egypt, with its total dependence on cavalry and disregard for infantry, was in direct line with the type of armies that emerged in the Muslim Middle East and Asia Minor, from the second half of the eleventh century onward. It had its advantages as well as grave shortcomings as is exemplified by the battle for Acre. Saladin's policies were in total accord with the religious and cultural values of his age and its political and military practices. His close aids and future historians—Qadi al-Fadil, 'Imad al-Din and Ibn Shaddad—could serve him without hesitation confident that the deeds of their master corresponded to their own sets of values and, at the same time, conformed to the world view of the whole of contemporary society.

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